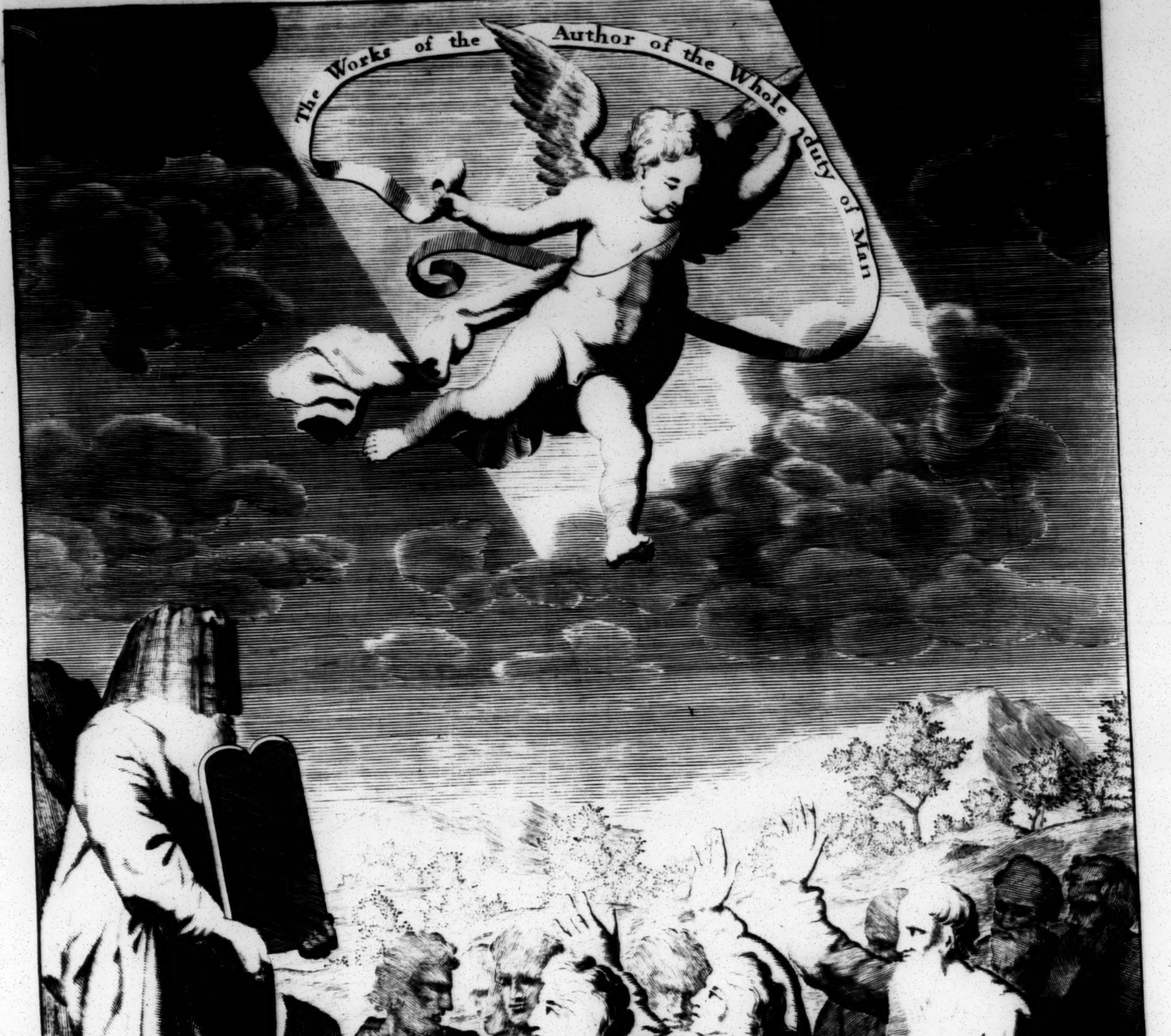
The Works of the Author of the Whole duty of Man
Till Moses had done speaking he put a veil on his face. Exod. 34. 33.
M V.d Gucht Sculp:

We preach not our selves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. 1 Cor. 4. 5.

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THE
WORKS

Of the Learned and Pious

AUTHOR

OF

The Whole Duty of Man.

Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright, for the end of that Man is peace. Psal. 37. 37.

M.V^d Gucht Sculp:

Printed at the Theater in *Oxford*, and in *London* by *Roger Norton*,
for *Edward Paulet* at the ſign of the Bible in *Chancery Lane*.
Anno Domini MDCCIV.

THE
WHOLE DUTY
OF
MAN,
LAID DOWN
In a Plain and Familiar Way
FOR THE
USE of ALL,
But eſpecially the
MEANEST READER.

Divided into Seventeen Chapters:
One whereof being read every Lord's Day, the Whole may be read over Thrice in the Year.

Neceſſary for all Families.

WITH
PRIVATE DEVOTIONS
For ſeveral OCCASIONS.

LONDON,
Printed by *William Norton*, for *E. Pawlet*, at the Sign of the Bible in *Chancery-Lane*, near *Fleetſtreet*, 1703.

A
PREFACE
To the enſuing
TREATISE,
SHEWING
The Neceſſity of Caring for the Soul.

Sect. 1. THE only intent of this enſuing Treatiſe, is to be a ſhort and Plain direction to the very meaneſt Readers, to behave themſeves ſo in this world, that they may be happy for ever in the next. But becauſe 'tis in vain to tell men their Duty, till they be perſwaded of the neceſſity of performing it, I ſhall, before I proceed to the Particulars required of every Chriſtian, endeavour to win them to the Practice of one general Duty preparatory to all the reſt; and that is the Conſideration and CARE of their own SOULS, without which they will never think themſelves much concern'd in the other.

2. MAN, we know, is made up of two parts, a BODY and a SOUL; The Body only the husk or ſhell of the Soul, a lump of fleſh, ſubject to many Diſeaſes and Pains while it lives, and at laſt to Death it ſelf; and then 'tis ſo far from being valued, that 'tis not to be endured above ground, but laid to rot in the Earth. Yet to this viler part of us we perform a great deal of Care; all the labour and toil we are at, is to maintain that. But the more precious part, the Soul, is little thought of, no care taken how it fares, but as if it were a thing that nothing concern'd us, is left quite neglected, never conſider'd by us.

3. This Careleſneſs of the Soul is the root of all the ſin we commit, and therefore whoſoever intends to ſet upon a Chriſtian courſe, muſt in the firſt place amend that. To the doing whereof, there needs no deep learning, or extraordinary parts; the ſimpleſt man living (that is not a natural fool) hath underſtanding enough for it, if he will but act in this by the ſame rules of common Reaſon, whereby he proceeds in his worldly buſineſs. I will therefore now briefly ſet down ſome of thoſe Motives, which uſe to ſtir up our Care of any outward thing, and then apply them to the Soul.

4. There be FOUR things eſpecially, which uſe to awake our Care; the Firſt is the Worth of the thing, the Second the Uſefulneſs of it to us, when we cannot part with it without great damage and miſchief, the Third the great Danger of it, and the Fourth the Likelihood that our Care will not be in vain, but that it will preſerve the thing cared for.

The worth of the Soul.

5. For the Firſt, we know our Care of any worldly thing is anſwerable to the Worth of it; what is of greateſt Price, we are moſt watchful to preſerve, and moſt fearful to loſe; no man locks up dung in his Cheſt, but his Money, or what he counts precious, he doth. Now in this reſpect the Soul deſerves more Care, than all the things in the World beſides, for 'tis infinitely more worth; firſt, in that it is made after the Image of God, it was God that breathed into Man this breath of life, Gen. 2. 7. Now God being

of the greateſt Excellency and worth, the more any thing is like him, the more it is to be valued. But 'tis ſure that no Creature upon the earth is at all like God, but the Soul of Man, and therefore nothing ought to have ſo much of our Care. Secondly, the Soul never Dies. We uſe to prize things according to their Durableneſs: What is moſt Laſting is moſt Worth. Now the Soul is a thing that will laſt for ever: When Wealth, Beauty, Strength, nay, our very Bodies themſelves fade away, the Soul ſtill continues. Therefore in that reſpect alſo, the Soul is of the greateſt worth; and then what ſtrange madneſs is it for us to neglect them as we do? We can ſpend days, and Weeks, and Months, and Years, nay, our wholes Lives in hunting after a little Wealth of this World, which is of no durance or continuance, and in the mean time let this great durable Treaſure, our Souls, be ſtolen from us by the Devil.

The miſery of loſing the Soul.

6. A ſecond Motive to our care of any thing, is the USEFULNESS of it to us, or the great miſchief we ſhall have by the loſs of it. Common reaſon teaches us this in all things of this Life. If our Hairs fall, we do not much regard, becauſe we can be well enough without them: But if we are in danger to loſe our Eyes or Limbs, we think all the care we can take little enough to prevent it, becauſe we know it will be a great miſery. But certainly there is no Miſery to be compared to that miſery that follows the Loſs of the Soul. 'Tis true, we cannot loſe our Souls, in one ſence, that is, ſo loſe them, that they ſhall ceaſe to Be; but we may loſe them in another, that we ſhould wiſh to loſe them even in that; That is, we may loſe that happy eſtate, to which they were created, and plunge them into the extremeſt miſery. In a word, we may loſe them in Hell, whence there is no fetching them back, and ſo they are loſt for ever. Nay, in this conſideration our very Bodies are concerned, thoſe Darlings of ours, for which all our care is laid out: For they muſt certainly after Death be raiſed again, and be joyned again to the Soul, and take part with it in whatever ſtate; If then our Care for the Body take up all our Time and Thoughts, and leave us none to beſtow on the poor Soul, it is ſure the Soul will for want of that Care be made for ever Miſerable. But it is as ſure, that that very Body muſt be ſo too. And therefore if you have any true kindneſs to your Body, ſhew it by taking Care for your Souls. Think with your ſelves, how you will be able to endure Everlaſting Burnings. If a ſmall ſpark of fire, lighting on the leaſt part of the body, be ſo intolerable, what will it be to have the whole caſt into the hotteſt flames? and that not for ſome few hours or days, but for ever? So that when you have ſpent many Thouſands of years in that unſpeakable Torment, you ſhall be no nearer coming out of it, than you were the firſt day you went in: Think of this, I ſay, and think this withal, that this will certainly be the end of Neglecting the Soul, and therefore afford it ſome care, if it be but in pity to the Body, that muſt bear a part in its Miſeries.

The danger the Soul is in.

7. The Third Motive to the care of any thing, is its being in DANGER; now a thing may be in danger two ways: Firſt, by Enemies from without: This is the Caſe of the Sheep, which is ſtill in danger of being devoured by Wolves; and we know that makes the Shepherd ſo much the more watchful over it. Thus it is with the Soul, which is in a great deal of danger, in reſpect of its enemies: Thoſe we know are the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil; which are all ſuch noted enemies to it, that the very firſt Act we do in behalf of our Souls, is to Vow a continual War againſt them. This we all do in our Baptiſm; and whoever makes any truce with any of them, is falſe not only to his Soul, but to his Vow alſo; becomes a forſworn creature: A Conſideration well worthy our laying to heart. But that we may the better underſtand, what Danger the Soul is in, let us a little conſider the quality of theſe Enemies.

8. *In a war, you know, there are divers things that make an Enemy terrible: The firſt is* Subtilty *and Cunning, by which alone many victories have been won; and in this reſpect the* Devil *is a dangerous adverſary; he long ſince gave ſufficient proof of his* Subtilty, *in beguiling our firſt Parents, who yet were much wiſer than we are; and therefore no wonder if he deceive and cheat us.* Secondly, *the* Watchfulneſs *and* Diligence *of an* Enemy *makes him the more to be Feared; and here the* Devil *exceeds: It is his trade and buſineſs to deſtroy us, and he is no loiterer at it,* he goes up and down ſeeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. 5. 8. *he watches all Opportunities of Advantage againſt us, with ſuch diligence, that he will be ſure never to let any ſlip him.* Thirdly, *an* Enemy *near us is more to be feared that one at a* Diſtance: *For if he be far off, we may have time to arm, and prepare our ſelves againſt him, but if he be near, he may ſteal on us unawares. And of this ſort is the* fleſh, *it is an Enemy, at our Doors, ſhall I ſay? nay in our Boſoms, it is always near us, to take occaſion of doing us miſchiefs.* Fourthly, *the* Baſer *and* Falſer *an* Enemy *is, the more dangerous. He that hides his malice under the ſhew of Friendſhip will be able to do a great deal the more hurt. And this again is the fleſh, which like* Joab *to* Abner, 2 Sam. 3. 27 *pretends to ſpeak* peaceably *to us,* but wounds us to Death; *'tis forward to purvey for Pleaſures and Delights for us, and ſo ſeems very kind, but it has a* hook *under that* bait, *and if we bite at it we are loſt.* Fifthly, *the number of* Enemies *makes them more Terrible; and the* World *is a vaſt Army againſt us: There is no ſtate or condition in it, nay, ſcarce a creature which doth not at ſome time or other fight againſt the Soul: The* Honours *of the World ſeek to wound us by* Pride, *the* Wealth *by* Covetouſneſs, *the* Proſperity *of it tempts us to forget* God, *the* Adverſities *to* murmur *at him. Our very* Table becomes a ſnare *to us, our meat draws us to* Gluttony, *our drink to* Drunkenneſs, *our* Company, *nay, our neareſt* Friends *often bear a part in this War againſt us, whilſt either by their example, or perſwaſions they entice us to ſin.*

9. *Conſider all this, and then tell me, whether a Soul thus beſet hath leiſure to* ſleep: *Even* Dalilah *could tell* Samſon, *it was time to* awake *when the* Philiſtines were upon him. *And* CHRIST *tells us,* If the good man of the houſe had known in what hour the Thief would come, he would have watched, and not have ſuffered his houſe to be broken up, *Mat.* 24. 43. *But we live in the midſt of thieves, and therefore muſt look for them every hour, and yet who is there among us, that hath that common providence for this precious part of him, his Soul, which he hath for his houſe, or indeed the meaneſt thing that belongs to him? I fear our Souls may ſay ſo to us, as Chriſt to his Diſciples,* Matth. 26. 40. What? could ye not watch with me one hour? *For I doubt it would poſe many of us to tell when we beſtowed one Hour on them, though we know them to be continually beſet with moſt dangerous Enemies. And then, alas! what is like to be the caſe of theſe poor Souls, when their Adverſaries beſtow ſo much care and diligence to deſtroy them, and we will afford none to preſerve them? Surely the ſame as of a beſieged Town, where no Watch or Guard is kept, which is certain to fall a prey to the Enemy.* Conſider, this ye that forget God, *nay, ye that forget your ſelves,* leſt he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you, *Pſal.* 50. 22.

10. *But I told you there was a* Second *way, whereby a thing may be in Danger, and that is from ſome Diſorder or Diſtemper within it ſelf. This is often the caſe of our* Bodies, *they are not only liable to outward Violence, but they are within themſelves Sick and diſeaſed. And then we can be ſenſible enough that they are in danger, and need not to be taught to ſeek out for means to recover them. But this is alſo the caſe of the* Soul, *we reckon thoſe parts of the body* diſeaſed, *that do not rightly perform their* office; *we account it a ſick palate that taſtes not aright, a ſick ſtomach that digeſts not. And thus it is with the* Soul *when its parts do not rightly perform their* Offices.

11. *The parts of the* Soul *are eſpecially theſe three: The* UNDERSTANDING, *the* WILL, *and the* AFFECTIONS. *And that theſe are diſordered, there needs little proof; let any man look ſeriouſly into his own Heart, and conſider how little it is he knows of ſpiritual things, and then tell me whether his* Underſtanding *be not dark? How much apter is he to* Will evil *than* good, *and then tell me whether his* Will *be not* Crooked? *And how ſtrong* Deſires *he hath after the pleaſures of ſin, and what* cold *and* faint *ones towards God and goodneſs, and then tell me whether his* Affections *be not* diſordered, *and rebellious even againſt the voice of his own Reaſon within him? Now as in bodily diſeaſes, the firſt ſtep to the cure is to know the cauſe of the ſickneſs; ſo likewiſe here it is very neceſſary for us to know how the* Soul *firſt fell into this* Diſeaſed condition, *and that I ſhall now briefly tell you.*

The firſt Covenant.

12. GOD *created the firſt Man* Adam *without Sin, and indued his* Soul *with the full* knowledge *of his* Duty; *and with ſuch a ſtrength, that he might, if he would, perform all that was required of him. Having thus created him, he makes a* COVENANT *or agreement with him to this purpoſe, that if he* continued *in* Obedience *to* God *without committing Sin; then firſt, that* Strength *of* Soul, *which he then had, ſhould ſtill be continued to him; and ſecondly, that he ſhould never die, but be taken up into* Heaven, *there to be Happy for ever. But on the other ſide, if he committed Sin and diſobeyed God, then both He and all his Children after him ſhould loſe that Knowledge and that* perfect Strength, *which enabled him to do all that God required of him: And* ſecondly, *ſhould be ſubject to* death, *and not only ſo, but to Eternal damnation in Hell.*

13. *This was the* Agreement *made with* Adam *and all* Mankind *in him (which we uſually call the* FIRST COVENANT) *upon which God gave* Adam *a particular* Commandment, *which was no more but this, that he ſhould not eat of* one *only* tree *of that* Garden *wherein he had placed him. But he by the perſwaſion of the Devil eats of that Tree, diſobeys God, and ſo brings that curſe upon himſelf, and all his poſterity. And ſo by that one* Sin *of his, he loſt both the full* knowledge *of his Duty, and the* Power *of* performing *it. And we being born after his* Image, *did ſo likewiſe, and ſo are become both* Ignorant *in diſcerning what we ought to Do, and* Weak *and unable to the doing of it, having a backwardneſs to all* good, *and an aptneſs, and readineſs to all evil; like a ſick* ſtomack, *which loaths all wholſome food, and longs after ſuch traſh, as may nouriſh the diſeaſe.*

14. *And now you ſee where we got this ſickneſs of Soul, and likewiſe that it is like to prove a deadly one, and therefore I preſume I need ſay no more, to aſſure you our Souls are in danger. It is more likely you will from this deſcription think them hopeleſs. But that you may not from that conceit excuſe your Neglect of them, I ſhall haſten to ſhew you the contrary, by proceeding to the* fourth Motive *of Care.*

That our Care will not be in vain.

15. *That* Fourth Motive *is the* likelihood, *that our* CARE *will not be in* VAIN, *but that it will be a means to preſerve the thing cared for; where this is wanting, it diſheartens our care. A Phyſician leaves his* Patient *when he ſees him paſt* Hope, *as knowing it is then in vain to give him any thing: But on the contrary when he ſees hope of recovery, he plies him with Medicines. Now in this very reſpect we have a great deal of reaſon to take care of our Souls, for they are not ſo far gone, but they may be recovered, nay, it is certain they will, if we do our parts towards it.*

16. *For though by that ſin of* Adam *all Mankind were under the ſentence of eternal condemnation, yet it pleaſed God ſo far to pity our miſery, as to give us his Son, and in him to make a new Covenant with us, after we had broken the firſt.*

17. *This*

The ſecond Covenant.

17. *This* SECOND COVENANT *was made with* Adam *and us in him, preſently after his Fall, and is briefly contained in thoſe words,* Gen. 3. 15. *where God* declares, That THE SEED OF THE WOMAN SHALL BREAK THE SERPENT's HEAD; *and this was made up, as the firſt was, of ſome mercies to be afforded by God, and ſome duties to be performed by us.*

18. *God therein promiſes to ſend his only* Son, *who is* God equal *with himſelf, to Earth, to become* man like unto us in all things, ſin only excepted, *and he to do for us theſe ſeveral things.*

19. Firſt, *to make* known *to us the* whole Will *of his* Father; *in the performance whereof we ſhall be ſure to be accepted and rewarded by him. And this was one great part of his buſineſs, which he performed in thoſe many Sermons and Precepts we find ſet down in the* Goſpel. *And herein he is our* PROPHET, *it being the work of a* Prophet *of old not only to* foretel, *but to* Teach. *Our duty in this particular is to hearken diligently to him, to be moſt ready and deſirous to learn that will of God which he came from Heaven to reveal to us.*

20. *The* Second *thing He was to do for us, was to* Satisfie God *for our Sins, not only that one of* Adam, *but all the Sins of all Mankind that truly repent and amend, and by this means to obtain for us Forgiveneſs of Sins, the Favour of God, and ſo to redeem us from Hell and eternal damnation, which was the puniſhment due to our ſin. All this he did for us by his death. He offered up himſelf a Sacrifice for the* Sins of all thoſe *who heartily bewail, and forſake them. And in this He is our* PRIEST, *it being the* Prieſt's *Office to* Offer Sacrifice for the ſins of the People. *Our duty in this particular is firſt, truly and heartily to Repent us of, and forſake our ſins, without which they will never be forgiven us, though Chriſt have died.* Secondly, *ſtedfaſtly to* Believe, *that if we do that, we ſhall have the benefits of that* Sacrifice *of his; all our ſins, how many and great ſoever, ſhall be forgiven us, and we ſaved from thoſe eternal puniſhments which were due unto us for them.* Another *part of the* PRIETS's Office *was* Bleſſing *and* Praying *for the People; and this alſo Chriſt performs to us. It was his ſpecial Commiſſion from his Father to Bleſs us, as* S. Peter *tells us,* Act. 3. 26. God ſent his Son *Jeſus* to bleſs you; *and the following words ſhew wherein that bleſſing conſiſts, in* turning away every one of you from his iniquity: *Thoſe means which he has uſed for the turning us from our Sins, are to be reckoned of all other the greateſt Bleſſings; and for the other part, that of* Praying, *that he not only performed on Earth, but continues ſtill to do it in Heaven,* He ſits on the right hand of God, and makes requeſt for us, *Rom.* 8. 34. *Our duty herein is, not to reſiſt this unſpeakable bleſſing of his, but to be willing to be thus bleſt in the being* turned from our ſins, *and not to make void and fruitleſs all his* Prayers *and* Interceſſions *for us, which will never prevail for us, whilſt we continue in them.*

21. *The* third *thing, that* Chriſt *was to do for us, was to* Enable *us, or give us* Strength *to do what God requires of us. This he doth,* firſt, *by taking off from the hardneſs of the Law given to* Adam, *which was, never to commit the leaſt ſin, upon pain of damnation, and requiring of us only an* honeſt *and* hearty endeavour *to do what we are able, and where we fail, accepting of* Sincere Repentance. Secondly, *By ſending his* Holy Spirit into our hearts *to govern and Rule us, to give us ſtrength to overcome Temptations to Sin, and to do all that He now under the Goſpel requires of us. And in this he is our* KING, *it being the Office of a* King *to govern and rule, and to ſubdue enemies. Our duty in this particular is to give up our ſelves obedient ſubjects of his, to be governed and ruled by him, to obey all his Laws, not to take part with any Rebel, that is, not to cheriſh any one ſin, but diligently to Pray for his* Grace *to enable us to ſubdue all, and then carefully to make uſe of it to that purpoſe.*

22. Laſtly, *He has purchaſed for all that faithfully* obey *him, an* Eternal glorious *inheritance, the* Kingdom *of* Heaven, *whither he is gone before to take poſſeſſion for us. Our duty herein is to be exceeding careful, that we forfeit not our parts in it, which we ſhall certainly do, if we continue impenitent in any ſin.* Secondly, *not to faſten our* Affections *on this world, but to raiſe them according to the precept of the Apoſtle,* Col. 3. 2. Set your Affections on things above, and not on things on the earth; *continually longing to come to the poſſeſſion of that bleſſed inheritance of ours, in compariſon whereof all things here below ſhould ſeem vile and mean to us.*

23. *This is the Sum of that* SECOND COVENANT *we are now under, wherein you ſee what* Chriſt *hath done, how he executes thoſe* Three Great Offices *of* KING, PRIEST *and* PROPHET: *as alſo what is required of us, without our faithful Performance of which, all that he hath done, ſhall never ſtand us in any ſtead; for he will never be a* Prieſt *to ſave any, who take him not as well for their* Prophet *to* Teach, *and their* King *to* Rule *them; nay, if we neglect our part of this* Covenant, *our condition will be yet worſe, than if it had never been made; for we ſhall then be to anſwer, not for the breach of Law only, as in the* firſt, *but for the abuſe of mercy, which is of all ſins the moſt provoking, On the other ſide, if we faithfully perform it, that is, ſet our ſelves heartily to the obeying of every Precept of Chriſt, not going on wilfully in any one ſin, but bewailing and forſaking whatever we have formerly been guilty of, it is then moſt certain, that all the forementioned benefits of Chriſt belong to us.*

24. *And now you ſee how little Reaſon you have, to caſt off the* CARE *of your* SOULS, *upon a conceit they are paſt cure, for that it is plain they are not; Nay, certainly they are in that very condition, which of all others makes them fitteſt for our care. If they had not been thus* REDEEMED *by* CHRIST, *they had been then ſo hopeleſs, that care would have been in vain; on the other ſide, if his Redemption had been ſuch, that* all *men ſhould be ſaved by it, though they live as they liſt, we ſhould have thought it needleſs to take care for them, becauſe they were ſafe without it. But it hath pleaſed* God *ſo to order it, that our care muſt be the* means, *by which they muſt receive the good even of all that* Chriſt *hath done for them.*

25. *And now if after all that God hath done to ſave theſe* Souls *of ours, we will not beſtow a little* Care *on them our ſelves, we very well deſerve to periſh. If a* Phyſician *ſhould undertake a Patient that were in ſome deſperate Diſeaſe, and by his skill bring him ſo far out of it, that he were ſure to recover, if he would but take care of himſelf, and obſerve thoſe rules the Phyſician ſet him, would you not think that man weary of his life, that* would refuſe to do that? *So certainly that man is weary of his* Soul, *wilfully caſts it away, that will not conſent to thoſe eaſie conditions, by which he may ſave it.*

26. *You ſee how great* kindneſs *God hath to theſe Souls of ours, the whole* TRINITY, Father, Son, *and* HOLY GHOST *have all done their parts for them. The* FATHER *gave his only* Son, *the* SON *gave Himſelf, left his Glory, and endured the bitter death of the* Croſs, *meerly to keep our* Souls *from periſhing. The* HOLY GHOST *is become as it were our Attendant, waits upon us with continual offers of his Grace, to enable us to do that which may preſerve them; nay he is ſo deſirous we ſhould accept thoſe Offers of his, that he is ſaid to be* grieved *when we refuſe them,* Epheſ. 4 30. *Now what greater diſgrace and affront can we put upon God, than to deſpiſe what he thus values? that thoſe Souls of ours, which Chriſt thought worthy every drop of his* blood, *we ſhould not think worth any part of our* Care? *We uſe in things of the world, to rate them according to the opinion of thoſe who are beſt skilled*

in them: Now certainly God *who made our* Souls, *beſt knows the* worth *of them, and ſince he prizes them ſo high, let us (if it be but in reverence to him) be aſhamed to neglect them. Eſpecially now that they are in ſo hopeful a condition, that nothing but our own careleſneſs can poſſibly deſtroy them.*

27. *I have now briefly gone over thoſe* Four Motives *of care I at firſt propoſed, which are each of them ſuch as never miſſes to ſtir it up towards the things of this World; and I have alſo ſhewed you how much more Reaſonable, nay, Neceſſary it is they ſhould do the like for the* Soul. *And now what can I ſay more, but conclude in the words of* Iſa. 46. 8. Remember this, and ſhew your ſelves men. *That is, deal with your* Soul *as your* Reaſon *teaches you to do with all other things that concern you. And ſure this common* Juſtice *binds you to; for the Soul is that which furniſhes you with that* Reaſon, *which you exerciſe in all your worldly buſineſs; and ſhall the Soul it ſelf receive no* Benefit *from that* Reaſon *which it affords you? This is, as if a* Maſter *of a* Family, *who provides food for his ſervants ſhould by them be kept from Eating any himſelf, and ſo remain the only ſtarved creature in his houſe.*

28. *And as Juſtice ties you to this, ſo* Mercy *doth likewiſe; you know the poor Soul will fall into Endleſs and unſpeakable Miſeries, if you continue to neglect it, and then it will be too late to conſider it. The laſt Refuge you can hope for, is* God's Mercy, *but that you have deſpiſed and abuſed. And with what face can you in your greateſt need beg for* his *mercy to your* Souls, *when you would not afford them your* own? *No, not that common* Charity *of conſidering them, of beſtowing a few of thoſe idle* Hours, *you know not (ſcarce) how to paſs away, upon them.*

29. *Lay this to your hearts, and as ever you hope for* God's Pity, *when you moſt want it, be ſure in time to* pity *your ſelves, by taking that due care of your* Precious Souls *which belongs to them.*

30. *If what hath been ſaid, have perſwaded you to this ſo* neceſſary *a* Duty, *my next work will be to tell you how this* Care *muſt be imployed; and that, in a word, is in the doing of all thoſe things which tend to the making the Soul happy, which is the end of our* Care, *and what thoſe are I come now to ſhew you.*

THE

PREFACE.

OUR excellent Author having wrote the Tracts which make up theſe Volumes, at ſeveral times, as the exigence of the Church, and the benefit of Souls directed their compoſure; did likewiſe publiſh them apart, in the ſame order as they were made: which procedure had this incidental advantage, that the Reader was not at any time affrighted, by too great a task at once impos'd upon him; and could carry about in all removes thoſe inſtructions, with which it was his intereſt to be ſtill converſant.

But on the other part there are inconveniences which accompany the edition of Manuals and little Tracts, which had an influence on theſe before us; that they are liable to be debas'd by ſtoln impreſſions, to be thought ſlightly of as pamphlets, to be ſcatter'd and loſt by reaſon of their ſmallneſs, and to be perfunctorily read, being portable from place to place, and thereby expos'd to be laid down, with the ſame eaſe they were taken up. To obviate theſe and the like accidents, this larger edition has been undertaken, that theſe moſt uſeful writings which have in pieces ſuffer'd by ſurreptitious impreſſions, may be ſecur'd from the attemts of needy pilferers, and the nightwork of underground preſſes; and being join'd together eſcape the danger of diſperſion or loſs, or negligent treatment: remaining in the Cloſets of the devout, and Libraries of the Learned, what Thucydides *call'd his Work, the* poſſeſſion *not only of preſent, but* of future times; *and there give entertainment to the fixt and ſedentary recollections of diligent Readers, being lookt* *into with ſtudy and concern proportionable to the dignity of the ſubjects treated of, and the judicious managery of them; and thereby, beyond that pitifull immortality which Heathen writers deſign'd unto their labors and themſelves: procure to others the actual enjoyment of perpetual bleſſedneſs, and in the nobleſt and moſt beneficial way, appear to be a* poſſeſſion to eternity.

It may not be amiſs in this place to give the Reader notice of an artifice that has bin us'd by ſeveral Writers, or Bookſellers, or both of them, to make their wares more paſſable, by a pretence to our Author. One entitles his Book The Duty of Man; *another,* The Whole Duty of Man laid down in expreſs words of Scripture; *another,* The Whole Duty of Man, part II. *and ſeveral ſubſequent books have been inſcrib'd, as wrote by the Authors of ſome of theſe. Now in all theſe caſes if an enquiry happen to be made, there is a ready ſubterfuge. The firſt ſaies the book which he refers to is the* Duty of Man, *not the* Whole Duty; *the ſecond declares that he means the* Whole Duty of Man laid down in expreſs words of Scripture; *and therefore when he averrs that ſuch or ſuch a book was written by the Author of* The whole Duty of Man, *there is an* &c. *added to ſhew that the title is imperfectly quoted. The third has to ſay for himſelf, that he has in plain terms told the world that* The whole Duty of Man, part II. *was not writ by the ſame hand that wrote the original Book, and if Readers will be negligent and not obſerve, he cannot help it. So many little arts there have been to make an advantage, and impoſe upon men, without telling a broad downright untruth. Beyond all theſe there is now lately come abroad a weak, rambling, incoherent Tract entitled,* the Vanity of the Creature, by the Author of the whole Duty of Man, *and leaſt this ſhould not be credited, the Reader is refer'd to a farther account in a letter prefixt to the book, which ſaies that the* little Tract, call'd the Vanity of the Creature, was written by the firſt Author of the whole duty of Man: *but indeed it is a ſtrange vanity of this Creature to hope to be believed in ſo extravagant an aſſeveration, which almoſt every period of that book confutes. To avoid like attemts and impoſtures for the future, it is here ſolemnly declar'd; that theſe Tracts which we here exhibit, are the genuine and the only writings of our Author.*

Indeed had Almighty God lent longer life to this eminent Perſon, we might have receiv'd many and ample benefits by it; and particularly a juſt treatiſe, which was deſign'd and promiſ'd, of the Government of the Thoughts, *an argument which none had more deeply conſider'd in it's utmoſt extent, or was better prepar'd* *par'd fully to comprehend or give direction in; for as 'tis the prerogative of Omniſcience to know the thoughts of others; ſo it requires a great meaſure of divine aſſiſtance and purity of heart to underſtand ones own. And certainly had this work been finiſht, 'twould have equal'd, if not excell'd, whatever that inimitable hand had formerly wrote: But the divine wiſdom judg'd it fit, to deny the benefit of this inſtitution to our profligate age, which is ſo little concern'd to regulate the ſallies of thought, that it ſtops at no extravagance of words or villany of actions; and is ſo far from being reduc'd by gentle methods of perſwaſion, as not to be reſtrain'd by the ſeverity of laws, or terrors of executions.*

'Tis not to be denied that in the diſputitg parts of religion men of impious lives may wrangle with much accuracy; and in the declamatory way harangue it with fluency and vehemence: but in the vital parts of piety the deſcription of the new creature, it's being enlightened, *and* taſting the good Word of God and Powers of the world to come; *this* ſecret of the Lord is only with them that fear him; a ſtranger doth not meddle with this joy, the carnal cannot underſtand it.

Therefore it may juſtly be eſteem'd as a particular recommendation of what is here deliver'd, that it was practice, before it was ſpeculation, and that we literally have the author's works. The whole Duty of Man *had it's firſt, and moſt correct edition in life and practice; and the* Tongue was govern'd, *and* Contentment *gain'd before they were deſcrib'd; nor was there any thing in this whole Volume wrote by gueſs and at adventure, but from long experience, and evidence of fact.*

Many, I doubt not, will now expect an account of the Perſon and condition of the Author; but beſides that it is an ill-manner'd thing, to pry into what is ſtudiouſly concealed; the gratifying this curioſity, would be an injury to the deſign of theſe Writings, by robbing them of one very efficacious motive of conviction. As the caſe now ſtands, all men muſt ſee and allow, that neither faction, nor intereſt, nor pride, nor covetouſneſs; nor other temporal advantage was ſought for by the time and pains emploid in theſe Diſcourſes: and that the ſetting forth the glory of God, and ſerving the intereſts of Piety in gaining ſouls, were intirely the inducements: and therefore in all reaſon to be hearken'd to and complied with, by all ſuch as have a conſideration of Duty and value for Eternity. It was an old and frequent objection againſt the Heathen writers of Morality, that to thoſe very Diſcourſes which they wrote of the contemt of Glory, they prefixt their names; and by their titles confuted their whole Books.

'Twill ſurely be of moment to evacuate this objection, ſince it would lie more ſtrongly againſt a Chriſtian Moraliſt, whoſe obligations to humility are greater than any heathens were; and who is ſtrictly bound to avoid *not only the approches to, but* all appearances of evil.

If the Reader ſhall pleaſe inſtead of uſeleſs enquiries, to bring the ſame devotion and ſincerity to the peruſal of theſe diſcourſes, as was emploid in the writing of them; if he print in his mind, and tranſcribe into his practice what he reads, his pains will be anſwer'd by ſuitable advantage: and this kind of edition will be ſuch, as will not be injurious to the Author or his book by debaſing of it; nor to the publiſhers propriety, in multiplying copies, and by this honeſt way, ſtealing an Impreſſion.

The pious Votary will by this method, more intimately acquaint himſelf with the Writer of theſe Tracts, than he could do by any the moſt punctual account of his Name and Family and Perſon, that a Herald, Hiſtorian or Painter could contrive. Let him be wiſe and humble, temperate, chaſt, patient, charitable and devout; live a whole age of great auſterities, and maintain an undiſturb'd ſerenity in the midſt of them; and then he will himſelf become a lively picture of our Author.

Since the time of the writing, and alſo printing the foregoing Preface, there is publiſhed a ſmall Tract entitled, The art of Patience under all afflictions, an Appendix to the Art of Contentment, by the Author of the whole duty of Man, &c. *which being a new inſtance of diſingenuous dealing with the memory of our Author, and enterprizing upon the belief of unwary Readers, it ſeem'd convenient to give this notice of it.*

THE

Whole Duty of Man.

SUNDAY I.

Of the Duty *of* Man *by the Light of Nature, by the Light of Scripture: The Three great branches of Man's Duty to God, our Selves, our Neighbour: Our Duty to God; of Faith, the Promiſes, of Hope, of Love, of Fear, of Truſt.*

THE Benefits purchaſed for us by *Chriſt*, are ſuch as will undoubtedly make the Soul Happy; for Eternal Happineſs it ſelf is one of them: But becauſe theſe Benefits belong not to us till we perform the Condition required of us; whoever deſires the happineſs of his Soul, muſt ſet himſelf to the performing of that Condition. What that is, I have already mentioned in the general, *That it is the hearty honeſt endeavour of obeying the whole will of God.* But then that Will of God containing under it many particulars, it is neceſſary we ſhould alſo know what thoſe are; that is, What are the ſeveral things, that God now requires of us, our performance whereof will bring us to everlaſting happineſs, and the neglect to endleſs miſery.

Of the light of Nature.

2. Of theſe things there are ſome which God hath ſo ſtamped upon our Souls, that we Naturally know them; that is, We ſhould have known them to be our Duty, though we had never been told ſo by the Scripture. That this is ſo, we may ſee by thoſe Heathens, who having never heard of either Old or New Teſtament, do yet acknowledge themſelves bound to ſome general Duties, as to Worſhip God, to be Juſt, to Honour their Parents, and the like; and as S. *Paul* ſaith, *Rom.* 2. 15. *Their Conſciences do in thoſe things accuſe or excuſe them*; that is, tell them, whether they have done what they ſhould in thoſe particulars or no.

3. Now though Chriſt hath brought greater light into the World, yet he never meant by it to put out any of that Natural Light, which God hath ſet up in our Souls: Therefore let me here, by the way, adviſe you not to walk contrary even to this leſſer Light. I mean not to venture on any of thoſe Acts, which meer Natural Conſcience will tell you are ſins.

4. It is juſt matter of ſadneſs to any Chriſtian Heart, to ſee ſome in theſe days, who profeſs much of Religion, and yet live in ſuch ſins, as a meer Heathen would abhor; men that pretending to higher degrees of light, and holineſs, than their brethren, do yet practiſe contrary to all Rules of common honeſty, and make it part of their Chriſtian Liberty ſo to do; of whoſe ſeducement it concerns all that love their Souls to beware: And for that purpoſe let this be laid as a Foundation, *That that Religion or Opinion cannot be of God, which allows men in any wickedneſs.*

5. But though we muſt not put out this Light which God hath thus put into our Souls, yet this is not the only way whereby God hath revealed his Will; and therefore we are not to reſt here, but proceed to the knowledge of thoſe other things which God hath by other means revealed.

The light of Scriptures.

6. The way for us to come to know them is by the Scriptures, wherein are ſet down thoſe ſeveral Commands of God which he hath given to be the Rule of our Duty.

7. Of thoſe ſome were given before Chriſt came into the World, ſuch are thoſe precepts we find ſcatter'd throughout the Old Teſtament, but eſpecially contained in the Ten Commandments, and that excellent Book of *Deuteronomy*; others were given by Chriſt, who added much, both to the Law implanted in us by Nature, and that of the Old Teſtament; and thoſe you ſhall find in the New Teſtament, in the ſeveral Precepts given by him and his Apoſtles, but eſpecially in that Divine Sermon on the Mount, ſet down in the fifth, ſixth and ſeventh Chapters of S. *Matthew*'s Goſpel.

8. All theſe ſhould be ſeverally ſpoke to, but becauſe that would make the diſcourſe very long, and ſo leſs fit for the meaner ſort of Men, for whoſe uſe alone it is intended, I chuſe to proceed in another manner; by ſumming up all theſe together, and ſo as plainly as I can, to lay down, what is now the duty of every Chriſtian.

The Three great branches of man's Duty.

9. This I find briefly contained in the words of the Apoſtle, *Tit.* 2. 12. *That we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*; where the word *Soberly* contains our *duty* to our *Selves*; *Righteouſly*, our *duty* to our *Neighbour*; and *Godly*, our *duty* to *God*. Theſe therefore ſhall be the Heads of my Diſcourſe, our DUTY to GOD, our SELVES, and our NEIGHBOUR. I begin with that to *God*, that being the beſt ground-work whereon to build both the other.

Duty to God.

10. There are many parts of our DUTY to GOD; the two chief are theſe: Firſt, To acknowledge him to be God; Secondly, To have no other. Under theſe are contained all thoſe particulars, which make up our whole Duty to God, which ſhall be ſhewed in their order.

Acknowledging him to be God.

11. To acknowledge him to be God, is to believe him to be an infinite glorious Spirit, that was from everlaſting, without beginning, and ſhall be to everlaſting, without end. That he is our Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one God, bleſſed for ever. That he is ſubject to no alteration, but is unchangeable; that he is no bodily ſubſtance, ſuch as our eyes may behold, but ſpiritual and inviſible, whom *no man hath ſeen or can ſee*, as the Apoſtle tells us, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. That he is infinitely great and Excellent, beyond all that our wit or conceit can imagine; that he hath received his being from none, and gives being to all things.

12. All this we are to believe of him in regard of his Eſſence and being: But beſides this, He is ſet forth to us in the *Scripture* by ſeveral *Excellencies*, as that he is of Infinite Goodneſs and Mercy, Truth, Juſtice, Wiſdom, Power, All-ſufficiency, Majeſty; that he diſpoſes and governs all things by his Providence; that he knows all things, and is preſent in all places; theſe are by Divines called the Attributes of God, and all theſe we muſt undoubtingly acknowledge, that is, we muſt firmly believe all theſe Divine Excellencies to be in God, and that in the greateſt degree; and ſo, that they can never ceaſe to be in him, he can never be other than *infinitely Good, Merciful, True*, &c.

13. But the acknowledging him for our God ſignifies yet more than this; it means that we ſhould perform to him all thoſe ſeveral parts of Duty which belong from a Creature to his God: what thoſe are I am now to tell you.

Faith.

14. The firſt is FAITH, or Belief, not only that formentioned of his Eſſence and Attributes, but of his Word, the believing moſt firmly, that all that he ſaith is perfectly true. This neceſſarily ariſes from that Attribute, his Truth, it being natural for us to believe whatſoever is ſaid of one of whoſe Truth we are confident. Now the Holy Scriptures being the Word of God, we are therefore to conclude, that all that is contained in them is moſt true.

Of his Affirmations.

15. The things contained in them are of theſe four ſorts: Firſt, *Affirmations*, ſuch are all the ſtories of the Bible, when it is ſaid ſuch and ſuch things came ſo and ſo to paſs; Chriſt was born of a Virgin, was laid in a Manger, *&c.* And ſuch alſo are many points of Doctrine, as that there are three Perſons in the *Godhead*, that *Chriſt* is the *Son of God*, and the like. All things of this ſort thus delivered in Scripture we are to believe moſt true. And not only ſo, but becauſe they are all written for our inſtruction, we are to conſider them for that purpoſe, that is, by them to lay that Foundation of Chriſtian Knowledge, on which we may build a Chriſtian Life.

Commands.

16. The ſecond ſort of things contained in the Scripture, are the *Commands*, that is, the ſeveral things enjoyned us by God to perform; theſe we are to believe to come from him, and to be moſt juſt and fit for him to command: But then this belief muſt bring forth obedience, that what we believe thus fit to be done, be indeed done by us; otherwiſe our belief that they come from him ſerves but to make us more inexcuſable.

Threatnings.

17. Thirdly, The Scripture contains *Threatnings*; many Texts there are which threaten to them that go on in their ſins, the wrath of God, and under that are contained all the puniſhments and miſeries of this Life, both ſpiritual and temporal, and everlaſting deſtruction in the Life to come. Now we are moſt ſtedfaſtly to believe, that theſe are God's threats, and that they will certainly be perform'd to every impenitent ſinner. But then the uſe we are to make of this belief is to keep from thoſe ſins to which this deſtruction is threatned; otherwiſe our belief adds to our guilt, that will wilfully go on in ſpight of thoſe threatnings.

Promiſes.

18. Fourthly, The Scripture contains *Promiſes*, and thoſe both to our Bodies and our Souls; for our Bodies there are many promiſes that God will provide for them what he ſees neceſſary, I will name only one, *Matth.* 6. 33. *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, and all theſe things*, that is, All outward neceſſaries, *ſhall be added unto you*; but here it is to be obſerved, that we muſt *firſt ſeek the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs*, that is, make it our firſt and greateſt care to ſerve and obey him, before this promiſe even of temporal good things belong to us. To the Soul there are many and high promiſes, as firſt, That of preſent eaſe and refreſhment, which we find, *Matth.* 11. 29. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye ſhall find reſt to your Soul:* But here it is apparent, that before this reſt belongs to us, we muſt have *taken on us Chriſt's yoke*, become his Servants and Diſciples. Finally, There are promiſes to the Soul even of all the Benefits of Chriſt; but yet thoſe only to ſuch as perform the Condition required; that is, Pardon of ſins to thoſe that repent of them, Increaſe of Grace to thoſe that diligently make uſe of what they have already, and humbly pray for more; and Eternal Salvation to thoſe that continue to their lives end in hearty obedience to his Commands.

19. This Belief of the Promiſes muſt therefore ſtir us up to perform the Condition, and till it do ſo, we can in no reaſon expect any good by them: And for us to look for the benefit of them on other terms, is the ſame

mad preſumption that it would be in a Servant to challenge his Maſter to give him a reward for having done nothing of his work, to which alone the reward was promiſed; you can eaſily reſolve what anſwer were to be given to ſuch a Servant, and the ſame are we to expect from God in this caſe. Nay further, it is ſure God hath given theſe promiſes to no other end, but to invite us to holineſs of life; yea, he gave his Son, in whom all his promiſes are as it were ſumm'd up, for this end. We uſually look ſo much at Chriſt's coming to ſatiſfie for us, that we forget this other part of his errand. But there is nothing ſurer, than that the main purpoſe of his coming into the World, was to plant good Life among Men.

20. This is ſo often repeated in Scripture, that no man that conſiders and believes what he reads can doubt of it. Chriſt himſelf tells us, *Matth.* 9. 13. *He came to call ſinners to repentance.* And S. *Peter*, *Acts* 3. 26. tells us, *That God ſent his Son Jeſus to bleſs us, in turning every one of us from his iniquities*; for it ſeems the *turning us from our iniquities* was the greateſt ſpecial Bleſſing which God intended us in Chriſt.

21. Nay, We are taught by S. *Paul*, That this was the end of his very death alſo, *Tit.* 2. 14. *Who gave himſelf for our ſins, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie to himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* And again, *Gal.* 1. 4. *Who gave himſelf for us that he might deliver us from this preſent evil world*, that is, from the ſins and ill cuſtoms of the World. Divers other Texts there are to this purpoſe; but theſe I ſuppoſe ſufficient to aſſure any Man of this one great truth, that all that Chriſt hath done for us was directed to this end, the bringing us to live Chriſtianly; or in the words of S. *Paul*, *To teach us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent world.*

22. Now we know Chriſt is the foundation of all the promiſes; *in him all the promiſes of God are yea, and Amen*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 20. And therefore if God gave Chriſt to this end, certainly the Promiſes are to the ſame alſo. And then how great an abuſe of them is it to make them ſerve for purpoſes quite contrary to what they were intended? *viz.* to the incouraging us in ſins, which they will certainly do, if we perſwade our ſelves they belong to us, how wickedly ſoever we live. The Apoſtle teaches us another uſe of them, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having therefore theſe Promiſes, let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.* When we do thus, we may juſtly apply the promiſes to our ſelves, and with comfort expect our parts in them. But till then, though theſe promiſes be of certain truth, yet we can reap no benefit from them, becauſe we are not the perſons to whom they are made, that is, We perform not the condition required to give us right to them.

23. This is the Faith or Belief required of us towards the things God hath revealed to us in the Scripture, to wit, ſuch as may anſwer the end for which they were ſo revealed, that is, The bringing us to good lives; the bare believing the truth of them, without this, is no more than the Devils do, as S. *James* tells us, Chap. 2. 19. Only they are not ſo unreaſonable as ſome of us are, for they will tremble as knowing well this Faith will never do them any good. But many of us go on confidently, and doubt not the ſufficiency of our Faith, though we have not the leaſt fruit of obedience to approve it by; let ſuch hear S. *James*'s judgment in the point, Chap. 2. 26. *As the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo Faith if it have not works is dead alſo.*

Hope. 24. A ſecond duty to God is HOPE, that is, a comfortable expectation of theſe good things he hath promiſed. But this, as I told you before of Faith, muſt be ſuch as agrees to the nature of the promiſes, which being ſuch as requires a condition on our part, we can hope no further than we make that good; or if we do, we are ſo far from performing by it this duty of Hope, that we commit the great ſin of Preſumption, which is nothing elſe but hoping where God hath given us no ground to hope: This every Man doth, that hopes for pardon of ſins and eternal life, without that repentance and obedience to which alone they are promiſed; the true Hope is that which purifies us, S. *John* ſaith, 1 Ep. 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure*; that is, it makes him leave his ſins, and earneſtly endeavour to be holy as Chriſt is, and that which doth not ſo, how confident ſoever it be, may well be concluded to be but that hope of the Hypocrite, which *Job* aſſures us ſhall periſh.

Preſumption.

Deſpair.

25. But there is another way of tranſgreſſing this Duty, beſides that of Preſumption, and that is by Deſperation, by which I mean not that which is ordinarily ſo called, *viz.* The deſpairing of Mercy, ſo long as we continue in our ſins, for that is but juſt for us to do: But I mean ſuch a deſperation as makes us give over endeavour, that is, when a Man that ſees he is not at the preſent ſuch a one as the Promiſes belong to, concludes he can never become ſuch, and therefore neglects all duty, and goes on in his ſins. This is indeed the ſinful deſperation, and that which if it be continued in, muſt end in deſtruction.

26. Now the work of hope is to prevent this, by ſetting before us the generality of the Promiſes, that they belong to all that will but perform the condition. And therefore though a Man have not hitherto performed it, and ſo hath yet no right to them, yet hope will tell him, that that right may yet be gained, if he will now ſet heartily about it. It is therefore ſtrange folly for any Man be he never ſo ſinful, to give up himſelf for loſt, when if he will but change his courſe, he ſhall be as certain to partake of the Promiſes of Mercy, as if he had never gone on in thoſe former ſins.

27. This Chriſt ſhews us in the Parable of the Prodigal, *Luke* 15. Where we ſee that Son, which had run away from his Father, and had conſumed the Portion given him in riotous living, was yet upon his return and repentance uſed with as much kindneſs by the Father, as he that had never offended, nay, with higher and more paſſionate expreſſions of love. The intent of which Parable was only to ſhew us how graciouſly our heavenly Father will receive us, how great ſoever our former ſins have been, if we ſhall return to him with true ſorrow for what is paſt, and ſincere obedience for the time to come; nay, ſo acceptable a thing is it to God, to have any ſinner return from the error of his ways, that there is a kind of triumph in Heaven for it, *There is joy in the preſence of the Angels of God, over one ſinner that repenteth, Luke* 15. 10. And now who would not rather chuſe by a timely repentance, to bring joy to Heaven, to God and his holy Angels, than by a ſullen deſperation to pleaſe Satan and his accurſed ſpirits; eſpecially when by the former we ſhall gain endleſs happineſs to our ſelves, and by the latter as endleſs torments?

Love its Motives.

28. A third Duty to God is LOVE; there are two common Motives of Love among Men. The one, the goodneſs and excellency of the Perſon, the other, his particular Kindneſs and Love to us; and both theſe are in the higheſt degree in God.

God's excellency.

29. Firſt, He is of infinite goodneſs and excellency in himſelf; this you were before taught to believe of him, and no Man can doubt it that con-

ſiders but this one thing, that there is nothing good in the world, but what hath received all its goodneſs from God: His Goodneſs is as the Sea or Ocean, and the goodneſs of all Creatures but as ſome ſmall ſtreams flowing from that Sea. Now you would certainly think him a mad man, that ſhould ſay the Sea were not greater than ſome little Brook: And certainly it is no leſs folly to ſuppoſe, that the goodneſs of God doth not as much (nay infinitely more) exceed that of all Creatures. Beſides, the goodneſs of the Creature is imperfect and mixt with much evil; but his is pure and entire without any ſuch mixture. He is perfectly Holy and cannot be tainted with the leaſt impurity, neither can he be the Author of any to us; for though he be the cauſe of all the goodneſs in us, he is the cauſe of none of our ſins. This S. *James* expreſly tells us, Chap. 1. 13. *Let no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.*

His kindneſs to us.

30. But ſecondly, God is not only thus good in himſelf, but he is alſo wonderful good, that is, kind and merciful to us. We are made up of two parts, a Soul and a Body, and to each of theſe God hath expreſſed infinite mercy and tenderneſs. Do but conſider what was before told you of the SECOND COVENANT, and the mercies therein offered, even Chriſt himſelf and all his benefits, and alſo that he offers them ſo ſincerely and heartily, that no Man can miſs of enjoying them but by his own default. For he doth moſt really and affectionately deſire we ſhould embrace them and live; as appears by that ſolemn Oath of his, *Ezek.* 33. 11. *As I live ſaith the Lord, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live:* Whereto he adds this paſſionate expreſſion, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?* To the ſame purpoſe you may read *Ezek.* 18. Conſider this, I ſay, and then ſurely you cannot but ſay, he hath great kindneſs to our Souls. Nay, let every man but remember with himſelf the many Calls he hath had to repentance and amendment; ſometimes outward by the Word, ſometimes inward by the ſecret whiſpers of God's Spirit in his heart, which were only to woo and intreat him to avoid Eternal Miſery, and to accept of Eternal Happineſs: Let him, I ſay, remember theſe, together with thoſe many other means God hath uſed toward him for the ſame end, and he will have reaſon to confeſs God's kindneſs, not only to mens Souls in general, but to his own in particular.

31. Neither hath he been wanting to our Bodies; all the good things they enjoy, as health, ſtrength, food, raiment, and whatever elſe concerns them, are merely his gifts: So that indeed it is impoſſible we ſhould be ignorant of his mercies to them, all thoſe outward comforts and refreſhments we daily enjoy, being continual effects and witneſſes of it; and though ſome enjoy more of theſe than others, yet there is no perſon but enjoys ſo much in one kind or other, as abundantly ſhews God's mercy and kindneſs to him in reſpect of his Body.

32. And now ſurely you will think it but reaſonable we ſhould Love him, who is in all reſpects thus Lovely: Indeed this is a duty ſo generally acknowledged, that if you ſhould ask any Man the queſtion, whether he loved God or no, he would think you did him great wrong to doubt of it; yet for all this, it is too plain, that there are very few, that do indeed love him; and this will ſoon be proved to you by examining a little, what are the common effects of love, which we bear to men like our ſelves, and then trying, whether we can ſhew any ſuch fruits of our love to God.

Fruit of Love, deſire of pleaſing.

33. Of that ſort there are divers, but for ſhortneſs I will name but two. The firſt is a deſire of pleaſing, the ſecond a deſire of enjoying. Theſe are conſtantly the fruits of Love. For the firſt, 'tis known by all, That he that loves any perſon is very deſirous to approve himſelf to him, to do whatſoever he thinks will be pleaſing to him; and according to the degree of Love, ſo is this deſire more or leſs; where we love earneſtly, we are very earneſt, and careful to pleaſe. Now if we have indeed that love to God, we pretend to, it will bring forth this fruit, we ſhall be careful to pleaſe him in all things. Therefore as you judge of the *tree by its fruits*, ſo may you judge of your Love of God, by this fruit of it; nay indeed this is the way of tryal, which Chriſt himſelf hath given us, *John* 14.15. *If you love me keep my Commandments*, and S. *John* tells us, 1 Ep. 5. 3. *That this is the love of God, that we walk after his Commandments*, and where this one proof is wanting, it will be impoſſible to teſtifie our Love to God.

34. But it muſt yet be farther conſidered, That this Love of God muſt not be in a low or weak degree; for beſides that the motives to it, His Excellency and his Kindneſs, are in the higheſt; the ſame Commandment which bids us love God, bids us *love him with all our hearts, and with all our ſtrength*, that is, as much as is poſſible for us, and above any thing elſe. And therefore to the fulfilling of this Commandment, it is neceſſary we love him in that degree; and if we do ſo, then certainly we ſhall have not only ſome ſlight and faint endeavours of pleaſing, but ſuch as are moſt diligent and earneſt, ſuch as will put us upon the moſt painful and coſtly duties, make us willing to forſake our own eaſe, goods, friends, yea, life it ſelf, when we cannot keep them without diſobeying God.

35. Now examine thy ſelf by this; haſt thou this fruit of Love to ſhew? Doſt thou make it thy conſtant and greateſt care to keep God's Commandments? To obey him in all things? Earneſtly labouring to pleaſe him to the utmoſt of thy power, even to the forſaking of what is deareſt to thee in this world? If thou doſt, thou mayeſt then truly ſay thou loveſt God. But on the contrary, if thou wilfully continueſt in the breach of many, nay, but of any one Command of his, never deceive thy ſelf, for the Love of God abides not in thee. This will be made plain to you, if you conſider what the Scripture ſaith of ſuch, as that they *are enemies to God by their wicked works*, *Col.* 1. 21. That the carnal mind (and ſuch is every one that continues *wilfully in ſin*) is *enmity to God*, *Rom.* 8. 7. That he that *ſins wilfully, tramples under foot the Son of God, and doth deſpight unto the Spirit of Grace*, *Heb.* 10. 29. and many the like. And therefore unleſs you can think enmity, and trampling, and deſpight to be fruits of Love, you muſt not believe you love God, whilſt you go on in any wilful diſobedience to him.

Deſire of Enjoying.

36. A ſecond fruit of Love, I told you, was deſire of Enjoying. This is conſtantly to be ſeen in our love to one another. If you have a friend whom you entirely love, you deſire his converſation, wiſh to be always in his company: And thus will it be alſo in our Love to God, if that be as great and hearty as this.

37. There is a twofold Enjoying of God, the one imperfect in this Life, the other more perfect and complete in the Life to come; That in this Life is that converſation, as I may call it, which we have with God in his Ordinances, in Praying and meditating, in Hearing his Word, in receiving the Sacrament, which are all intended for this purpoſe, to bring us into an intimacy and familiarity with God by ſpeaking to him, and hearing him ſpeak to us.

38. Now if we do indeed Love God, we ſhall certainly hugely value and deſire theſe ways of converſing with him; it being all that we can have in this life, it will make us with *David* eſteem *one day in God's Courts better than a thouſand, Pſal.* 84. 10. We ſhall be glad to have theſe opportunities of approaching to him as often as it is poſſible, and be careful to uſe them diligently, to that end of uniting us ſtill more to him; yea we ſhall come to theſe ſpiritual exerciſes with the ſame chearfulneſs we would go to our deareſt friend. And if indeed we do thus, it is a good proof of our Love.

39. But I fear there are not many have this to ſhew for it, as appears by the common backwardneſs and unwillingneſs of Men to come to theſe; and their negligence and heartleſneſs when they are at them; and can we think that God will ever own us for lovers of him, whilſt we have ſuch diſlike to his company, that we will never come into it but when we are dragg'd by fear, or ſhame of men, or ſome ſuch worldly Motive? It is ſure you would not think that man loved you, whom you perceived to ſhun your company, and to be loth to come in your ſight. And therefore be not ſo unreaſonable as to ſay, You love God, when yet you deſire to keep as far from him as you can.

40. But beſides this there is another Enjoyment of God, which is more perfect and complete and that is our perpetual enjoying of him in Heaven, where we ſhall be for ever united to him, and enjoy him not now and then only for ſhort ſpaces of time, as we do here, but continually without interruption, or breaking off. And certainly if we have that degree of Love to God we ought, this cannot but be moſt earneſtly deſired by us ſo much, that we ſhall think no labour too great to compaſs it. The ſeven years that *Jacob* ſerved for *Rachel*, Gen. 29. 20. *ſeemed to him but a few days for the love that he had to her:* And ſurely if we have love to God, we ſhall not think the ſervice of our whole lives too dear a price for this full Enjoyment of him, nor eſteem all the Enjoyments of the World worth the looking on in compariſon thereof.

41. If we can truly tell our ſelves we do thus long for this enjoyment of God, we may believe we love him. But I fear again there are but few that can thus approve their Love. For if we look into mens lives, we ſhall ſee they are not generally ſo fond of this Enjoyment, as to be at any pains to purchaſe it. And not only ſo, but it is to be doubted, there are many who if it were put to their choice, whether they would live here always to enjoy the Profit and Pleaſure of the World, or go to Heaven to enjoy God, would like the children of *Gad* and *Reuben*, ſet up their reſt on this ſide *Jordan, Numb.* 32. and never deſire that heavenly *Canaan*; ſo cloſe do their affections cleave to things below, which ſhews clearly they have not made God their Treaſure, for then according to our Saviour's Rule, *Matth.* 6. 21. their heart would be with him. Nay, further yet; it is too plain that many of us ſet ſo little value on this enjoying of God, that we prefer the vileſt and baſeſt ſins before him, and chuſe to enjoy them, though by it we utterly loſe our parts in him, which is the caſe of every Man that continues wilfully in thoſe ſins.

42. And now I fear, according to theſe Rules of Trial, many that profeſs to love God, will be found not to do ſo. I conclude all with the words of S. *John*, 1 *Ep.* 3. 18. which though ſpoken of the Love of our Brethren, is very fitly appliable to this Love of God, *Let us not love in word neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*

43. A Fourth

Fear.

43. A Fourth duty to God is FEAR; this ariſes from the conſideration both of his Juſtice and his Power; his Juſtice is ſuch, that he will not clear the wicked, and his Power ſuch, that he is able to inflict the ſoreſt puniſhments upon them; and that this is a reaſonable cauſe of Fear, Chriſt himſelf tells us, *Matth.* 10. 28. *Fear him which is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in Hell.* Many other places of Scripture there are, which commend to us this duty, as *Pſal.* 2. 11. *Serve the Lord with fear,* Pſal. 34. 9. *Fear the Lord ye that be his Saints.* Prov. 9. 10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom,* and divers the like; and indeed all the threatnings of wrath againſt ſinners, which we meet with in the Scripture, are only to this end, to work this fear in our hearts.

44. Now this Fear is nothing elſe, but ſuch an awful regard of God, as may keep us from offending him. This the Wiſe Man tells us, *Prov.* 16. 17. *The fear of the Lord is to depart from evil:* ſo that none can be ſaid truly to fear God, that is not thereby withheld from ſin; and this is but anſwerable to that common fear we have towards Man; who ever we know may hurt us, we will beware of provoking; and therefore if we be not as wary of diſpleaſing God, it is plain we fear Men more than we do him.

The folly of fearing Men more than God.

45. How great a madneſs this is, thus to fear Men above God, will ſoon appear, if we compare what Man can do to us with that which God can. And firſt, it is ſure, it is not in the power of Man (I might ſay Devils too) to do us any hurt, unleſs God permit and ſuffer them to do it; ſo that if we do but keep him our friend, we may ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *The Lord is on my ſide, I fear not what man can do unto me.* For let their malice be never ſo great, he can reſtrain and keep them from hurting us; nay he can change their minds towards us, according to that of the Wiſe Man, *Prov.* 16. 7. *When a man's ways pleaſe the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.* A notable example of this we have in *Jacob, Gen.* 32. who when his brother *Eſau* was coming againſt him as an enemy, God wonderfully turned his heart, ſo that he met him with all the expreſſions of brotherly kindneſs, as you may read in the next Chapter.

46. But ſecondly, Suppoſe men were left at liberty to do thee what miſchief they could; alas! their power goes but a little way; they may perhaps rob thee of thy goods, it may be they may take away thy liberty, or thy credit, or perchance thy life too, but that thou knoweſt is the utmoſt they can do. But now God can do all this when he pleaſes, and that which is infinitely more, his vengeance reaches even beyond death it ſelf, to the eternal miſery both of Body and Soul in Hell; in compariſon of which Death is ſo inconſiderable, that we are not to look upon it with any dread. *Fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do,* ſaith Chriſt, *Luke* 12. 4. and then immediately adds, *But I will forewarn you whom ye ſhall fear, fear him which after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into Hell, yea, I ſay unto you, fear him.* In which words the compariſon is ſet between the greateſt ill we can ſuffer from Man, the loſs of Life, and thoſe ſadder evils God can inflict on us; and the latter are found to be the only dreadful things, and therefore God only to be feared.

47. But there is yet one thing further conſiderable in this matter, which is this, It is poſſible we may tranſgreſs againſt men, and they not know it: I may perhaps ſteal my neighbour's Goods, or defile his Wife, and keep it ſo cloſe that he ſhall not ſuſpect me, and ſo never bring me to puniſhment for it: But this we cannot do with God, he knows all things, even the moſt ſecret thoughts of our hearts; and therefore though we commit a ſin never ſo cloſely, he is ſure to find us, and will as ſurely, if we do not timely repent, puniſh us eternally for it.

48. And now ſurely it cannot but be confeſt that it is much ſafer diſpleaſing Man than God; yet alas, our practice is as if we believed the direct contrary, there being nothing more ordinary with us, than for the avoiding of ſome preſent danger we fear from men, to ruſh our ſelves upon the indignation of God. And thus it is with us, when either to ſave our eſtates, or credits, or our very lives, we commit any ſin, for that is plainly the chuſing to provoke God, rather than Man.

49. But God knows this caſe of fear of Men is not the only one wherein we venture to diſpleaſe him; for we commit many ſins, to which we have none of this temptation, nor indeed any other; as for inſtance, that of common ſwearing, to which there is nothing either of pleaſure or profit, to invite us. Nay, many times, we, who ſo fear the miſchiefs that other men may do to us, that we are ready to buy them off with the ~~greateſt~~ ſins, do our ſelves bring all thoſe very miſchiefs upon us, by ſins of our own chuſing. Thus the careleſs prodigal robs himſelf of his eſtate, the deceitful and diſhoneſt Man, or any that lives in open notorious ſin, deprives himſelf of his credit, and the Drunkard and Glutton brings diſeaſes on himſelf, to the ſhortning his life. And can we think we do at all fear God, when that fear hath ſo little power over us, that though it be backt with the many preſent miſchiefs that attend upon ſin, it is not able to keep us from them? Surely ſuch men are ſo far from fearing *God*, that they rather ſeem to defie him, reſolve to provoke him, whatſoever it coſt them, either in this World or the next. Yet ſo unreaſonably partial are we to our ſelves, that even ſuch as theſe will pretend to this fear: You may examine multitudes of the moſt groſs ſcandalous ſinners, before you ſhall meet with one that will acknowledge he fears not God. It is ſtrange it ſhould be poſſible for men thus to cheat themſelves; but however it is certain we cannot deceive God, he will not be mockt, and therefore if we will not now ſo fear as to avoid ſin, we ſhall one day fear when it will be too late to avoid puniſhment.

Truſt.

50. A fifth duty to God, is that of TRUSTING in him, that is, depending and reſting on him: And that is firſt in all dangers, ſecondly in all wants. We are to reſt on him in all our dangers, both Spiritual and Temporal. Of the firſt ſort, are all thoſe Temptations, by which we are in danger to be drawn to ſin. And in this reſpect he hath promiſed, that if we *reſiſt the Devil, he ſhall flee from us*, *Jam.* 4. 7. Therefore our duty is firſt to pray earneſtly for God's grace to enable us to overcome the Temptation; and ſecondly, To ſet our ſelves manfully to combat with it, not yielding or giving conſent to it in the leaſt degree; and whilſt we do thus, we are confidently to reſt upon God, that his grace will be ſufficient for us, that he will either remove the temptation, or ſtrengthen us to withſtand it.

In all ſpiritual dangers.

In all Temporal.

51. Secondly, In all outward and Temporal dangers we are to reſt upon him, as knowing that he is able to deliver us, and that he will do ſo if he ſee it beſt for us, and if we be ſuch to whom he hath promiſed his protection, that is, ſuch as truly fear him. To this purpoſe we have many promiſes in Scripture, *Pſal.* 34. 7. *The Angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them:* And *Pſal.* 34. 20. *The Lord delivereth the ſouls of his Saints, and all that put their truſt in him ſhall not be deſtitute*; and divers the like. And alſo we have many examples, as that of the Three Children in the Furnace, *Daniel* 3. That of *Daniel* in the Lions Den, *Dan.* 6. and many others; all which ſerve to teach us this one Leſſon, that if we go on conſcionably in performing our duty, we need not be diſmayed

for any thing that can befal us, for the God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us.

Not ſeek to deliver our ſelves by any Sin.

52. Therefore in all dangers we are firſt humbly to pray for his aid, and then to reſt our ſelves chearfully on him; aſſuring our ſelves that he will give ſuch an iſſue as ſhall be moſt for our good. But above all things, we muſt be ſure to fix our dependance wholly on him, and not to rely on the creatures for help; much leſs muſt we ſeek to deliver our ſelves by any unlawful means, that is, by the committing of any ſin; for that is like *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 28. 7. *to go to the witch*, that is, to the *Devil* for help; ſuch courſes do commonly deceive our hopes at the preſent, and inſtead of delivering us out of our ſtraits, plunge us in greater, and thoſe much more uncomfortable ones, becauſe then we want that which is the only ſupport, God's favour and aid, which we certainly forfeit, when we thus ſeek to reſcue our ſelves by any ſinful means. But ſuppoſing we could by ſuch a way certainly free our ſelves from the preſent danger; yet alas, we are far from having gained ſafety by it; we have only removed the danger from that which was leſs conſiderable, and brought it upon the moſt precious part of us, our Souls; like an unskilful Phyſician, that to remove a pain from the finger, ſtrikes it to the heart; we are therefore groſly miſtaken, when we think we have played the good Husband in ſaving our Liberties or Eſtates, or Lives themſelves by a ſin; we have not ſaved them, but madly overbought them, laid out our very Souls on them: And Chriſt tells us how little we ſhall gain by ſuch bargains, *Mat.* 16. 26. *What is a man profited if he ſhall gain the whole world and loſe his own ſoul?* Let us therefore reſolve never to value any thing we can poſſeſs in this world at ſo high a rate, as to keep it at the price of the leaſt ſin; but whenever things are driven to ſuch an iſſue, that we muſt either part with ſome, perhaps all our worldly poſſeſſions, nay, life it ſelf, or elſe commit a ſin, let us then remember, that this is the ſeaſon for us to perform that great and excellent duty of *taking up the Croſs*, which we can never ſo properly do as in this caſe; for our bearing of that which we have no poſſible way of avoiding, can at moſt be ſaid to be but the carrying of the Croſs, but then only can we be ſaid to take it up, when having a means of eſcaping it by a ſin, we rather chuſe to endure the Croſs, than commit the ſin; for then it is not laid on us by any unavoidable neceſſity, but we willingly chuſe it; and this is highly acceptable with God, yea, withal ſo ſtrictly required by him, that if we fail of performing it, when we are put to the trial, we are not to be accounted followers of Chriſt, for ſo himſelf hath expreſly told us, *Mat.* 16. 24. *If any man come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs, and follow me*; and ſo again, *Mark* 8. 34. It were therefore a good point of Spiritual Wiſdom for us, ſometimes by ſome lower degrees of ſelf-denial, to fit our ſelves for this greater, when we ſhall be called to it; we know he that expects to run a Race will beforehand be often breathing himſelf, that he may not be foil'd when he comes to run for the prize; in like manner it will be fit for us, ſometimes to abridge our ſelves ſomewhat of our Lawful Pleaſure, or Eaſe, or Profit, ſo that we may get ſuch a maſtery over our ſelves, as to be able to renounce all, when our obedience to God requires it.

In all wants Spiritual.

53. And as we are thus to truſt on God for deliverance from danger, ſo are we likewiſe for ſupply of our wants; and thoſe again are either Spiritual or Temporal: Our Spiritual want is that of his Grace to enable us to ſerve him, without which we can do nothing: And for this we are to depend on him, provided, we neglect not the means, which are Prayer and a careful uſing of what he hath already beſtowed on us: For then we have his pro-

miſe for it, *He will give the holy Spirit to them that ask it*, Luke 11. 15. and *unto him that hath ſhall be given*, Matth. 25. 29. that is, *To him that hath made a good uſe of that grace he hath already, God will give more*. We are not therefore to affright our ſelves with the difficulty of thoſe things God requires of us, but remember he commands nothing which he will not enable us to perform, if we be not wanting to our ſelves. And therefore let us ſincerely do our parts, and confidently aſſure our ſelves, God will not fail of his.

Temporal wants.

54. But we have likewiſe Temporal and Bodily wants, and for the ſupply of them we are likewiſe to rely on him. And for this alſo we want not Promiſes, ſuppoſing us to be of the number of them to whom they are made, that is, God's faithful Servants: *They that fear the Lord lack nothing*, Pſal. 34. 9. and ver. 10. *They that ſeek the Lord ſhall want no manner of thing that is good:* Again, Pſal. 33. 18, 19. *Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy, to deliver their ſouls from death, and to feed them in time of famine.* Examples alſo we have of this, as we may ſee in the caſe of *Elijah*, and the *poor widow*, 1 *Kings* 17. and many others.

55. We are therefore to look up to him for the proviſion of all things neceſſary for us, according to that of the *Pſalmiſt, The eyes of all wait upon thee, O Lord, and thou giveſt them their meat in due ſeaſon.* And our Saviour hath taught us to pray for our *daily bread*; thereby teaching us that we are to live in continual dependance upon God for it. Yet I mean not by this that we ſhould ſo expect it from God, as to give up our ſelves to idleneſs and expect to be fed by Miracle. No, our honeſt induſtry and labour is the means by which God ordinarily gives us the neceſſaries of this life; and therefore we muſt by no means neglect that. *He that will not labour, let him not eat*, ſays the Apoſtle, 2 *Theſſ*. 3. 10. And we may believe God will pronounce the ſame ſentence, and ſuffer the ſlothful perſon to want even neceſſary food. But when we have faithfully uſed our own endeavour, then we muſt alſo look up to God for his bleſſing on it, without which it can never proſper to us. And having done thus, we may comfortably reſt our ſelves on his Providence for ſuch a meaſure of theſe outward things, as he ſees fitteſt for us.

56. But if our condition be ſuch, that we are not able to labour, and have no other means of bringing in the neceſſaries of life to our ſelves, yet even then we are chearfully to reſt upon God, believing that he who feeds the Ravens, will by ſome means or other, though we know not what, provide for us, ſo long as he pleaſes we ſhall continue in this world, and never in any caſe torment our ſelves with carking and diſtruſtful thoughts, but as the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet*. 5. 7. *Caſt all our care on him that careth for us.*

57. This is earneſtly preſt by our Saviour, *Matth*. 6. where he abundantly ſhews the folly of this ſin of diſtruſt. The place is a moſt excellent one, and therefore I ſhall ſet it down at large, Verſe 25. *Therefore I ſay unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you ſhall eat, or what you ſhall drink; neither for your body what you ſhall put on; Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold, the Fowls of the Air, for they ſowe not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet our heavenly Father feedeth them. Are you not much better than they? which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his ſtature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Conſider the Lilies of the Field how they grow, they toil not, neither do they ſpin, and yet I ſay unto you that even* Solomon *in all his glory was not arrayed like one of theſe. Wherefore*

if God ſo cloath the graſs of the Field, which to day is, and to morrow is caſt into the Oven, ſhall he not much more cloath you, O ye of little Faith? Therefore take no thought, ſaying, What ſhall we eat? Or what ſhall we drink? Or wherewithal ſhall we be cloathed? (for after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all theſe things. But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, and then all theſe things ſhall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for to morrow, for the morrow ſhall take thought for the things of it ſelf? ſufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. I might add many other Texts to this purpoſe, but this is ſo full and convincing, that I ſuppoſe it needleſs.

58. All therefore that I ſhall ſay more concerning this duty is to put you in mind of the great benefits of it; as firſt, that by this truſting upon God, you engage and bind him to provide for you. Men, you know, think themſelves highly concern'd not to fail thoſe that depend and truſt upon them; and certainly God doth ſo much more. But then ſecondly, there is a great deal of eaſe and quiet in the practice of this duty, it delivers us from all thoſe carkings and immoderate cares which diſquiet our minds, break our ſleep, and gnaw even our very heart. I doubt not but thoſe that have felt them, need not be told they are uneaſie, but then me thinks that uneaſineſs ſhould make us forward to embrace the means for the removing of them, and ſo we ſee it too often doth in unlawful ones; Men will cheat, and ſteal, and lye, and do any thing to deliver themſelves from the fear of want. But alas they commonly prove but deceitful remedies; they bring God's curſe on us, and ſo are more likely to betray us to want, than to keep us from it. But if you deſire a certain and unfailing cure for cares, take this of relying upon God. *The benefits of truſt in God*

59. For what ſhould cauſe that Man to fear want that knows he hath one that cares for him, who is All-ſufficient, and will not ſuffer him to want what is fit for him? if a poor Man had but a faithful promiſe from a wealthy perſon that he would never ſuffer him to want, it is ſure he would be highly cheered with it, and would not then think fit to be as carking as he was before: and yet a Man's promiſe may fail us, he may either grow poor and not be able, or he may prove falſe and not be willing to make good his word. But we know, God is ſubject neither to impoveriſhing nor deceit. And therefore how vile an injury do we offer to him, if we dare not truſt as much upon his promiſe as we would that of a Man? Yea, and how great a miſchief do we do our ſelves by loading our minds with a multitude of vexatious and tormenting cares, when we may ſo ſecurely *caſt our burden upon God*? I conclude this in the words of the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 4. 6. *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication with thanksgiving, let your requeſts be made known to God.*

SUNDAY II.

Of Humility, of Submiſſion to God's Will, in reſpect of Obedience; of Patience in all ſorts of ſufferings, and of Honour due to God in ſeveral ways, in his Houſe, Poſſeſſions, his Day, Word, Sacraments, &c.

Sect. 1. A SIXTH Duty to God is HUMILITY, that is, ſuch a ſenſe of our own meanneſs and his excellency, as may work in us lowly and unfeigned ſubmiſſion to him: This ſubmiſſion is twofold; firſt, to his Will; ſecondly, to his Wiſdom. *Humility.*

Submiſſion to God's Will in reſpect of Obedience.

2. The ſubmiſſion to his Will is alſo of two ſorts, the ſubmiſſion either of Obedience, or Patience; that of Obedience is our ready yielding our ſelves up to do his Will, ſo that when God hath by his command made known to us what his pleaſure is, chearfully and readily to ſet about it, to enable us to this, humility is exceeding neceſſary; for a proud perſon is of all others the unapteſt to obey, and we ſee men never pay an Obedience, but where they acknowledge the Perſon commanding to be ſome way above them, and ſo it is here. If we be not throughly perſwaded that God is infinitely above us, that we are vileneſs and nothing in compariſon of him, we ſhall never pay our due Obedience.

The great diſtance between God and us.

3. Therefore if ever you mean to obey entirely (as you muſt if ever you mean to be ſaved) get your hearts poſſeſt with the ſenſe of that great unſpeakable diſtance that is between God and you. Conſider him as he is a God of infinite Majeſty and Glory; and we poor Worms of the Earth; He infinite in Power, able to do all things, and we able to do nothing, not ſo much as to make one *hair white or black*, as our Saviour ſpeaks, *Matth.* 5. 36. He of infinite Purity and Holineſs, and we polluted and defiled, wallowing in all kind of ſins and uncleanneſs; He unchangeable and conſtant, and we ſubject to change and alteration every minute of our lives; He Eternal and Immortal, and we frail mortals, that whenever he *taketh away our breath we die, and are turned again to our duſt*, *Pſalm* 104. 29. Conſider all this, I ſay, and you cannot but acknowledge a wide difference between God and Man, and therefore may well cry out with *Job*, after he had approacht ſo near to God, as to diſcern ſomewhat of his excellency, *Job* 42. 56. *Now mine eye ſeeth thee, wherefore I abhor my ſelf and repent in duſt and aſhes.*

The unworthineſs of our beſt works.

4. And even when this Humility hath brought us to Obedience, it is not then to be caſt off, as if we had no further uſe of it; for there is ſtill great uſe, nay neceſſity of it, to keep us from any high conceits of our performances, which if we once entertain, it will blaſt the beſt of them, and make them utterly unacceptable to God; like the ſtrictneſs of the *Phariſee*, which when once he came to boaſt of, the *Publican* was preferred before him, *Luke* 18. The beſt of our works are ſo full of infirmity and pollution, that if we compare them with that perfection and purity which is in God, we may truly ſay with the Prophet, *All our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags*, *Iſaiah* 64. 6. and therefore to pride our ſelves in them, is the ſame madneſs that it would be in a Beggar to brag of his Apparel, when it is nothing but vile rags and tatters. Our Saviour's Precept in this matter muſt always be remembred, *Luke* 17. 10. *When you have done all thoſe things, which are commanded you, ſay, We are unprofitable ſervants*; if when we have done all, we muſt give our ſelves no better a title, what are we then to eſteem our ſelves, that are ſo far from doing any conſiderable part of what we are commanded? Surely that worſer name of *ſlothful* and *wicked ſervant*, *Matth.* 25. 26. we have no reaſon to think too bad for us.

Submiſſion in reſpect of Patience.

5. A ſecond ſort of Submiſſion to his Will, is that of Patience; this ſtands in ſuffering his Will, as that of Obedience did in acting it, and is nothing elſe but a willing and quiet yielding to whatever afflictions it pleaſes God to lay upon us. This the forementioned Humility will make eaſie to us, for when our hearts are throughly poſſeſt with that reverence and eſteem of God, it will be impoſſible for us to grudge or murmur at whatever he does. We ſee an inſtance of it in Old *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 3. who after he had heard the ſad threatnings of God againſt him, of the deſtruction of his family, the loſs of the Prieſthood, the cutting off both his ſons in one day,

which were all of them afflictions of the heavieſt kind, yet this one conſideration, that it was the Lord, enabled him calmly and quietly to yield to them; ſaying, *Let him do what ſeemeth him good*, Verſe 18. The ſame effect it had on *David*, in his ſufferings, *Pſal.* 39. 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it.* God's doing it ſilenced all murmurings and grumblings in him. And ſo it muſt do in us, in all our afflictions, if we will indeed approve our humility to God.

6. For ſurely you will not think that Child hath due humility to his Parent, or that Servant to his Maſter, that when they are corrected, ſhall flie in the Father's or Maſter's face. But this do we whenever we grudge and repine at that which God lays upon us. But beſides the want of Humility in our ſo doing, there is alſo a great want of Juſtice in it; for God hath as we are his Creatures, a right to do with us what he will, and therefore for us to reſiſt that Right of his, is the higheſt injuſtice that can be; nay, farther, it is alſo the greateſt folly in the World, for it is only our good that God aims at in afflicting us; that Heavenly Father is not like our Earthly ones, who ſometime correct their Children only to ſatisfie their own angry humour, not to do them good. But this is ſubject to no ſuch frailties, *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, Lam.* 3.33. They are our ſins, which do not only give ~~him~~ juſt cauſe, but even force and neceſſitate him to puniſh us. He carries to us the bowels and affections of the tendereſt Father: Now when a Father ſees his Child ſtubborn and rebellious, and running on in a courſe that will certainly undo him, what greater act of Fatherly kindneſs can he do than chaſten and correct him, to ſee if by that means he may amend him? nay indeed he could not be ſaid to have true kindneſs to him if he ſhould not. And thus it is with God when he ſees us run on in ſin, either he muſt leave off to love us, and ſo leave us to our ſelves to take our own courſe, and that is the heavieſt curſe that can befal any Man; or elſe if he continue to love us, he muſt correct and puniſh us to bring us to amendment. Therefore whenever he ſtrikes, we are in all reaſon, not only patiently to lie under his rod, but (as I may ſay) kiſs it alſo; that is, be very thankful to him, that he is pleaſed not to *give us over to our own hearts luſts, Pſal.* 81.12. But ſtill continues his care of us; ſends afflictions, as ſo many meſſengers to call us home to himſelf. You ſee then how groſs a folly it is to murmur at thoſe ſtripes which are meant ſo graciouſly; it is like that of a froward Patient, which reproaches and reviles the Phyſician that comes to cure him, and if ſuch a one be left to die of his diſeaſe, every one knows whom he is to thank for it.

7. But it is not only quietneſs, no nor thankfulneſs neither under afflictions, that is the full of our Duty in this matter; we muſt have fruitfulneſs alſo, or all the reſt will ſtand us in no ſtead. By fruitfulneſs I mean the bringing forth that, which the afflictions were ſent to work in us; *viz.* The amendment of our lives. To which purpoſe in time of affliction it is very neceſſary for us to call our ſelves to an account, to examine our hearts and lives, and ſearch diligently what Sins lie upon us, which have provoked God thus to ſmite us, and whatſoever we find our ſelves guilty of, humbly to confeſs to God, and immediately to forſake for the reſt of our time.

Fruitfulneſs under them.

8. All I ſhall add concerning this duty of Patience, is, That we are as much bound to it in one ſort of ſufferings, as another, whether our ſufferings be ſo immediately from God's hand, that no Creature hath any thing to do in it, as ſickneſs, or the like; or whether it be ſuch, wherein men are the inſtruments of afflicting us. For it is moſt ſure when any Man doth

In all ſorts of ſufferings.

doth us hurt he could not do it without God's permiſſion and ſufferance, and God may as well make them the inſtruments of puniſhing us, as do it more directly by himſelf; and it is but a counterfeit patience, that pretends to ſubmit to God, and yet can bear nothing from men; we ſee holy *Job*, who is ſet forth to us as a pattern of true patience, made no ſuch difference in his afflictions; he took the loſs of his Cattle, which the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans* robb'd him of, with the very ſame meekneſs with which he did that which was conſumed by fire from Heaven. When therefore we ſuffer any thing from Men, be it never ſo unjuſtly in reſpect of them, we are yet to confeſs it moſt juſt in reſpect of God, and therefore inſtead of looking upon them with rage and revenge, as the common cuſtom of the world is, we are to look up to God, acknowledge his Juſtice in the affliction, begging his pardon moſt earneſtly for thoſe ſins, which have provoked him to ſend it, and patiently and thankfully bear it, till he ſhall ſee fit to remove it; ſtill ſaying with *Job, bleſſed be the name of the Lord.*

Submiſſion to God's wiſdom.

In his commands.

9. But I told you Humility contained in it a ſubmiſſion not only to his Will, but alſo to his Wiſdom; that is, To acknowledge him infinitely Wiſe, and therefore that whatever he doth, is beſt and fitteſt to be done. And thus we are to confeſs both in his commands, and in his diſpoſing and ordering of things: Firſt, Whatſoever he commands us either to believe or do, we are to ſubmit to his Wiſdom in both, to believe whatever he bids us believe, how impoſſible ſoever it ſeems to our ſhallow underſtandings, and to do whatever he commands us to do, how contrary ſoever it be to our fleſhly Reaſon or Humour, and in both to conclude, that his Commands are moſt fit and reaſonable, however they appear to us.

In his diſpoſals.

10. Secondly, We are to ſubmit to his Wiſdom in reſpect of his Diſpoſal and ordering of things; to acknowledge he diſpoſes all things moſt Wiſely, and that not only in what concerns the World in general; but alſo in what concerns every one of us in particular; ſo that in what condition ſoever he puts us, we are to aſſure our ſelves it is that which is beſt for us, ſince he chuſes it for us who cannot err. And therefore never to have impatient deſires of any thing in this World, but to leave it to God to fit us with ſuch an eſtate and condition as he ſees beſt for us, and there let us quietly and contentedly reſt; yea, though it be ſuch as of all others we ſhould leaſt have wiſh'd for our ſelves. And this ſurely cannot but appear very reaſonable to any that hath Humility; for that having taught him that God is infinitely wiſe, and he very fooliſh, he can never doubt but that it is much more for his good that God ſhould chuſe for him than he for himſelf; even as it is much more for the Child's good to have the Parent chuſe for it, than to be left to thoſe ſilly choices it would make for it ſelf. For how many times would it cut, and burn, and miſchief it ſelf if it might have every thing it deſires! And ſuch Children are we, we many times eagerly deſire thoſe things which would undo us if we had them. Thus many times we wiſh for Wealth, and Honour, and Beauty, and the like, when if we had them they would only prove ſnares to us, we ſhould be drawn into ſin by them. And this God, who knows all things, ſees, though we do not, and therefore often denies us thoſe thing which he ſees will tend to our miſchief, and it is his abundant mercy that he doth ſo. Let us therefore whenever we are diſappointed of any of our aims and wiſhes, not only patiently but joyfully ſubmit to it, as knowing that it is certainly beſt for us, it being choſen by the unerring Wiſdom of our Heavenly Father.

Honour.

11. A ſeventh Duty to God is HONOUR, that is, the paying him ſuch a reverence and reſpect as belongs to ſo great a Majeſty. And this is either inward or outward. The inward is the exalting him in our hearts, having always the higheſt and moſt excellent eſteem of him. The outward is the manifeſting and ſhewing forth that inward; and that is the firſt general in the whole courſe of our lives, the living like men that do indeed carry that high eſteem of God. Now you know if we bear any ſpecial Reverence but to a Man, we will be careful not to do any foul or baſe thing in his preſence, and ſo if we do indeed honour God, we ſhall abhor to do any unworthy thing in his ſight. But God ſees all things, and therefore there is no way to ſhun the doing it in his ſight if we do it at all; therefore if we do thus reverence him, we muſt never at any time do any ſinful thing.

Several ways of honouring God,

12. But beſides this general way of Honouring God, there are many particular acts by which we may Honour him, and theſe acts are divers according to the ſeveral particulars about which they are exerciſed. For we are to pay this Honour not only immediately to himſelf, but alſo by a due eſtimation and account of all thoſe things that nearly relate or belong to him. Thoſe are eſpecially ſix; Firſt, His *Houſe*; Secondly, His *Revenue* or Income (as I may ſay,) Thirdly, His *Day*; Fourthly, His *Word*; Fifthly, His *Sacraments*; and Sixthly, His *Name*; and every one of theſe is to have ſome degree of our Reverence and Eſteem.

In his Houſe.

13. Firſt, His *Houſe*, that is, The Church, which being the place ſet apart for his publick Worſhip, we are to look on it, though not as holy in reſpect of it ſelf, yet in reſpect of its uſe, and therefore muſt not profane it by employing it to uſes of our own. This Chriſt hath taught us by that act of his, *Matth.* 21. 12. in driving the buyers and ſellers out of the Temple, ſaying, *My houſe is called the houſe of Prayer:* And again, *John* 2. 16. *Make not my Father's houſe a houſe of Merchandize.* By which it is clear, Churches are to be uſed only for the ſervice of God, and we are to make that the only end of our coming thither, and not to come to Church as to a Market to make bargains or diſpatch buſineſſes with our Neighbours, as is too common among many. But whenever thou entreſt the Church, remember that it is the Houſe of God, a place where he is in an eſpecial manner preſent, and therefore take the counſel of the Wiſe Man, *Eccleſ.* 5. 1. and *keep thy foot when thou goeſt into the houſe of God*; that is, behave thy ſelf with that godly awe and reverence which belongs to that great Majeſty thou art before. Remember that thy buſineſs there is to converſe with God, and therefore ſhut out all thoughts of the World, even of thy moſt lawful buſineſs, which though they be allowable at another time, are here ſinful. How fearful a guilt is it then to entertain any ſuch thoughts as are in themſelves wicked? It is like the Treaſon of *Judas*, who pretended indeed to come to kiſs his Maſter, but brought with him a band of Souldiers to apprehend him, *Matth.* 26. We make ſhew in our coming to Church of ſerving and worſhipping God, but we bring with us a train of his enemies to provoke and deſpite him. This is a wickedneſs that may outvie the profaneneſs of theſe days, in turning Churches into Stables; for ſinful and polluted thoughts are much the worſe ſort of Beaſts.

His poſſeſſions.

14. The Second Thing to which reſpect belongs, is his *Revenue* or Income; that is, whatſoever is his peculiar poſſeſſions, ſet apart for the maintenance of thoſe that attend his Service; thoſe were the Prieſts in time of the Law, and Miniſters of the Goſpel now with us. And whatever is

thus ſet apart, we muſt look on with ſuch reſpect as not to dare to turn it to any other uſe. Of this ſort ſome are the free-will offerings of men, who have ſometimes of their own accord given ſome of their Goods or Lands to this Holy uſe; and whatſoever is ſo given, can neither by the perſon that gave it, nor any other be taken away, without that great ſin of Sacrilege.

15 But beſides theſe, there was among the *Jews*, and hath always been in all Chriſtian Nations, ſomething allotted by the Law of the Nation for the ſupport and maintenance of thoſe that attend the ſervice of God. And it is but juſt and neceſſary it ſhould be ſo, that thoſe who by undertaking that Calling are taken off from the ways of gaining a levelihood in the world, ſhould be provided for by them whoſe Souls they watch over. And therefore it is moſt reaſonable, which the Apoſtle urges in this matter, 1 *Cor.* 9. 11. *If we have ſown unto you ſpiritual things, is it a great thing if we ſhall reap your carnal things?* That is, it is moſt unreaſonable for men to grudge the beſtowing a few carnal things, the outward neceſſaries of this temporal life, on them from whom they receive ſpiritual things, even inſtruction and aſſiſtance towards the obtaining of an eternal life.

The great ſin of Sacrilege.

16. Now whatſoever is thus appointed for this uſe, may by no means be employed to any other. And therefore thoſe Tithes which are here by Law allotted for the maintenance of the Miniſtry muſt by no means be kept back, nor any tricks or ſhifts uſed to avoid the payment either in whole or in part. For firſt, it is certain, that it is as truly theft as any other robbery can be, Miniſters having right to their Tithes by the ſame Law, which gives any other man right to his Eſtate. But then ſecondly, it is another manner of robbery than we think of, it is a robbing of God, whoſe Service they were given to maintain: And that you may not doubt the truth of this, it is no more than God himſelf hath ſaid of it, *Mal.* 3. 8. *Will a man rob God; Yet ye have robbed me; yet ye ſay, Wherein have we robbed thee? In Tithes and Offerings.* Here it is moſt plain, that in God's account the with-holding Tithes is a robbing of him. And if you pleaſe you may in the next verſe ſee what the gain of this robbery amounts to, *Ye are curſed with a curſe.* A curſe is all is gotten by it; and common experience ſhews us, that GOD's vengeance doth in a remarkable manner purſue this ſin of ſacrilege, whether it be that of with-holding Tithes, or the other of ſeizing on thoſe poſſeſſions, which have been voluntarily conſecrated to God. Men think to enrich themſelves by it, but it uſually proves directly contrary; this unlawful gain becomes ſuch a Canker in the Eſtate, as often eats out even that we had a juſt title to. And therefore if you love (I will not ſay your Souls, but) your Eſtates, preſerve them from that danger by a ſtrict care never to meddle with any thing ſet apart for God.

The puniſhment.

The Times for his Service.

Lord's day.

17. A Third thing, wherein we are to expreſs our Reverence to God, is the hallowing of the Times ſet apart for his Service. He who hath given all our Time, requires ſome part of it to be paid back again, as a Rent or Tribute of the whole. Thus the *Jews* kept holy the *Seventh Day*, and we Chriſtians the *Sunday* or *Lord's Day*: the *Jews* were in their Sabbath eſpecially to remember the Creation of the World, and we in ours, the Reſurrection of Chriſt, by which a way is made for us into that better World we expect hereafter. Now this day thus ſet apart, is to be employed in the Worſhip and Service of God, and that firſt more ſolemnly and publickly in the Congregation, from which no man muſt then abſent himſelf without a Juſt cauſe: And ſecondly, privately at home in praying with, and inſtructing our Families, or elſe in the yet more private duties of the

cloſet; a man's own private Prayers, Reading, Meditating, and the like.

And that we may be at leiſure for theſe, a Reſt from all our worldly buſineſs is commanded; therefore let no Man think that a bare reſt from labour is all that is required of him on the Lord's Day; but the time which he ſaves from the works of his calling, he is to lay out on thoſe Spiritual Duties. For the Lord's Day was never ordained to give us a pretence for idleneſs, but only to change our imployment from worldly to heavenly, much leſs was it meant that by our reſt from our Callings we ſhould have more time freely to beſtow upon our ſins, as too many do, who are more conſtant on that day at the Alehouſe than the Church. But this Reſt was commanded, Firſt, To ſhadow out to us that Reſt from ſin which we are bound to all the days of our lives. And ſecondly, To take us off from our worldly buſineſs, and to give us time to attend the ſervice of God, and the need of our Souls.

18. And ſurely if we rightly conſider it, it is a very great benefit to us that there is ſuch a ſet time thus weekly returning for that purpoſe. We are very intent and buſie upon the World, and if there were not ſome ſuch time appointed to our hands, it is to be doubted we ſhould hardly allot any our ſelves: And then what a ſtarv'd condition muſt theſe poor Souls of ours be in, that ſhall never be afforded a meal? Whereas now there is a conſtant diet provided for them; every Sunday, if we will conſcionably employ it, may be a feſtival day to them, may bring them in ſuch Spiritual Food, as may nouriſh them to Eternal Life. We are not to look on this day with grudging, like thoſe in *Amos* 8. 5. who ask, *When will the Sabbath be gone, that we may ſet forth wheat?* As if that time were utterly loſt which were taken from our worldly buſineſs. But we are to conſider it, as the gainfulleſt, as the joyfulleſt day of the week, a day of harveſt, wherein we are to lay up in ſtore for the whole week, nay for our whole lives.

The Feaſts of the Church.

19. But beſides this of the weekly Lord's Day, there are other times which the Church hath ſet apart for the remembrance of ſome ſpecial mercies of God, ſuch as the Birth and Reſurrection of Chriſt, the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, and the like, and theſe days we are to keep in that manner which the Church hath ordered, to wit, in the ſolemn Worſhip of God, and in particular thankſgiving for that ſpecial bleſſing we then remember. And ſurely whoever is truly thankful for thoſe rich mercies, cannot think it too much to ſet a-part ſome few days in a year for that purpoſe.

But then we are to look that our Feaſts be truly ſpiritual, by imploying the day thus holily, and not make it an occaſion of intemperance and diſorder, as too many do, who conſider nothing in Chriſtmas and other good times, but the good cheer and jollity of them. For that is doing deſpight inſtead of honour to Chriſt, who came to bring all purity and ſoberneſs into the World; and therefore muſt not have that coming of his remembred in any other manner.

20. Other days there are alſo ſet apart in memory of the Apoſtles and other Saints, wherein we are to give hearty thanks to God, for his graces in them; particularly, that they were made inſtruments of revealing to us Chriſt *Jeſus*, and the way of Salvation, as you know the Apoſtles were by their Preaching throughout the World. And then farther, we are to meditate on thoſe Examples of Holy Life they have given us, and ſtir up our ſelves to the imitation thereof. And whoever does uprightly ſet himſelf to make theſe uſes of theſe ſeveral Holy-days, will have cauſe by the benefit he ſhall find from them, to thank, and not to blame the Church for ordering them.

The Faſts. 21. Another ſort of Days there are, which we are likewiſe to obſerve, and thoſe are days of Faſting and Humiliation; and whatever of this kind the Church enjoyns, whether conſtantly at ſet times of the year, or upon any ſpecial and more ſudden occaſion, we are to obſerve in ſuch manner as ſhe directs; that is, not only in a bare abſtaining from meat, which is only the Bodies puniſhment; but in afflicting our Souls, humbling them deeply before God, in a hearty confeſſing, and bewailing of our own, and the Nations ſins, and earneſt prayer for God's pardon and forgiveneſs, and for the turning away of thoſe judgments which thoſe ſins have called for: But above all, in *turning our ſelves from our ſins, looſing the bands of wickedneſs*, as *Iſaiah* ſpeaks, Chap. 58. *6.* and exerciſing our ſelves in works of mercy, *dealing our bread to the hungry*, and the like, as it there follows.

God's Word. 22. Fourthly, We are to expreſs our Reverence to God, by honouring his Word; and this we muſt certainly do if we do indeed honour him, there being no ſurer ſign of our deſpiſing any perſon, than the ſetting light by what he ſays to us; as on the contrary, if we value one, every word he ſpeaks will be of weight with us. Now this Word of God is expreſly contained in the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Teſtament, where he *The holy Scriptures.* ſpeaks to us to ſhew us his Will and our Duty. And therefore to this Word of his, we are to bear a wonderful reſpect, to look upon it, as the rule by which we muſt frame all the actions of our life; and to that end to ſtudy it much, to read in it as often as we can, if it may be, never to let a day paſs us without reading or hearing ſome part of it read.

23. But then that is not all: We muſt not only read, but we muſt mark what we read, we muſt diligently obſerve, what Duties there are which God commands us to perform, what faults they are, which God there charges us not to commit, together with the rewards promiſed to the one, and the puniſhment threatned to the other. When we have thus marked, we muſt lay them up in our memory; not ſo looſely and careleſly that they ſhall preſently drop out again; but we muſt ſo faſten them there by often thinking and meditating on them, that we may have them ready for our uſe. Now that uſe is the directing of our lives; and therefore whenever we are tempted to the committing of any evil, we are then to call to mind, This is the thing which in ſuch a Scripture is forbidden by God, and all his vengeances threatned againſt it; and ſo in like manner when any opportunity is offered us of doing good, to remember, This is the duty which I was exhorted to in ſuch a Scripture, and ſuch glorious rewards promiſed to the doing of it; and by theſe conſiderations ſtrengthen our ſelves for reſiſtance of the evil and performance of the good.

24. But beſides this of the written Word, it hath pleaſed God to provide yet farther for our inſtruction by his Miniſters, whoſe office it is to teach us God's Will, not by ſaying any thing contrary to the written Word (for whatſoever is ſo, can never be God's Will) but by explaining it, and making it eaſier to our underſtandings, and then applying it to our particular occaſions, and exhorting and ſtirring us up to the practice of it; all which is the end at which firſt their Catechizing and then their Preaching aimeth. And to this we are to bear alſo a due reſpect by giving diligent heed thereto, not only being preſent at Catechizings and Sermons, and either ſleep out the time, or think of ſomewhat elſe, but carefully marking what is ſaid to us. And ſurely if we did but rightly conſider, how much it concerns us, we ſhould conclude it very reaſonable for us to do ſo.

Catechizing. 25. For firſt, As to that of Catechizing, it is the laying the foundation upon which all Chriſtian practice muſt be built; for, that is the teaching us our duty, without which it is impoſſible for us to perform it. And though it is true, that the Scriptures are the Fountains, from whence this knowledge of duty muſt be fetch'd, yet there are many, who are not able to draw it from this Fountain themſelves, and therefore it is abſolutely neceſſary it ſhould be thus brought to them by others.

26. This Catechizing is generally lookt on a thing belonging only to the youth, and ſo indeed it ought, not becauſe the oldeſt are not to learn, if they be ignorant, but becauſe all Children ſhould be ſo inſtructed, that it ſhould be impoſſible for them to be ignorant when they come to years. And it nearly concerns every Parent, as they will free themſelves from the guilt of their Childrens eternal undoing, that they be careful to ſee them inſtructed in all neceſſary things; to which purpoſe it will be fit early to teach them ſome ſhort Catechiſm, of which ſort none ſo fit as the Church Catechiſm; yet are they not to reſt on theſe endeavours of their own, but alſo to call in the Miniſter's help, that he may build them up farther in Chriſtian Knowledge.

27. But alas! It is too ſure that Parents have very much neglected this Duty, and by that means it is that ſuch multitudes of Men and Women that are called Chriſtians, know no more of Chriſt, or any thing that concerns their own Souls, than the meereſt Heathen.

28. But although it were their Parent's fault that they were not inſtructed when they were young, yet it is now their own, if they remain ſtill ignorant; and it is ſure it will be their own ruine and miſery if they wilfully continue ſo. Therefore whoever he be, of what age or condition ſoever, that is in this ignorant eſtate, or in any ſuch degree of it, that he wants any part of neceſſary ſaving Knowledge, let him as he loves his Soul, as ever he would eſcape Eternal Damnation, ſeek out for inſtruction, and let no fear of ſhame keep any from it; For firſt it is certain the ſhame belongs only to the wilful continuing in ignorance, to which the deſire of learning is directly contrary, and is ſo far from a ſhameful, that it is a moſt commendable thing, and will be ſure to be ſo accounted by all wiſe and good Men. But ſecondly, Suppoſe ſome profane, ſenceleſs people ſhould deride it, yet ſure that ſhame were in all reaſon to be undergone joyfully, rather than venture on that confuſion of face which will at the day of Judgment befal thoſe who to avoid a little falſe ſhame amongſt Men, have gone on in a wilful ignorance of their duty, which ignorance will be ſo far from excuſing any ſins they ſhall commit, that it adds one great and heavy ſin to all the reſt, even the deſpiſing that knowledge which is offered to them. How hainous a ſin that is, you may learn in the firſt Chapter of the *Proverbs*; where *hating knowledge*, verſe 29. is ſaid to be the thing that draws down thoſe ſad vengeances forementioned, even God's forſaking Men, laughing at their calamity inſtead of helping them: Which is of all other conditions in the World the moſt miſerable; and ſurely they are madly deſperate that will run themſelves into it.

29. As for thoſe who have already this foundation laid by the knowledge of the grounds of Chriſtian Religion, there is yet for them a farther help provided by Preaching. And it is no more than needs, for, God knows, thoſe that underſtand their duty well enough are too apt to forget it; nay, ſometimes by the violence of their own luſts to tranſgreſs it even when they do remember it, and therefore it is very uſeful we ſhould often be put in mind of it to prevent our forgetting, and alſo often exhorted and aſſiſted to withſtand thoſe luſts which draw us to thoſe tranſgreſſions. And to theſe purpoſes Preaching is intended, firſt, to warn us to be upon our *Preaching.*

our guard againſt our ſpiritual enemy, and then to furniſh us with weapons for the fight; that is, ſuch means and helps as may beſt enable us to beat off tempations, and get the victory over them.

30. Since therefore this is the end of Preaching, we muſt not think we have done our duty when we have heard a Sermon, though never ſo attentively, but we muſt lay up in our hearts thoſe inſtructions and advices we there meet with, and uſe them faithfully to that end of overcoming our ſins. Therefore whenever thou comeſt to the Phyſician of thy Soul, do as thou wouldſt with the Phyſician of thy Body; thou comeſt to him not only to hear him talk and tell thee what will cure thee, but alſo to do according to his directions; and if thou doſt not ſo here, thou art as vain as he that expects a bare Receipt from his Doctor ſhall cure him, though he never make uſe of it. Nay, thou art much more vain and ridiculous, for that, though it do him no good, will do him no harm, he ſhall never be the worſe for having been taught a Medicine, though he uſe it not: But in theſe Spiritual Receipts it is otherwiſe; if we uſe them not to our good, they will do us a great deal of harm, they will riſe up in Judgment againſt us, and make our condemnation ſo much the heavier. Beware therefore not to bring that danger upon thy ſelf, but when thou haſt heard a Sermon, conſider with thy ſelf what directions there were in it for enabling thee to eſchew evil, or to do good. And if there were any thing eſpecially concern'd thine own boſom ſin, lay that cloſe to thy heart, and all the week after make it matter of meditation; think of it even whilſt thou art at thy work, if thou wanteſt other time; and not only think of it, but ſet to the practice of it, do what thou wert adviſed to, for the ſubduing ſins, and quickening grace in thee. Finally, Look carefully to practiſe the counſel of the Apoſtle, *James* 1. 22. *Be ye doers of the Word, not hearers only, deceiving your own ſouls.* To hope for good from the word without doing it, is, it ſeems, nothing but a deceiving our ſelves: Let us never therefore meaſure our godlineſs by the number of Sermons which we hear, as if the hearing many were the certain mark of a good Chriſtian; but by the ſtore of fruit we bring forth by them, without which all our hearing will ſerve but to bring us into that heavier portion of ſtripes, which belongs to him that *knows his Maſter's will and does it not, Luke* 12. 47. But this reverence which is due to Preaching we muſt not pay to all that is now adays called ſo, for God knows there are many *falſe Prophets gone out into the world*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *John* 4. 1. And now, if ever, is that advice of his neceſſary, *To try the ſpirits whether they be of God.* But what I have ſaid, I mean only of the Preaching of thoſe who firſt have a lawful calling to the Office, and ſecondly frame their doctrine according to the right rule, the written Word of God. But if any Man, ſay, he is not able to judge whether the Doctrine be according to the Word or no, let him at leaſt try it by the common known rules of duty which he doth underſtand, and if he find it a doctrine giving men liberty to commit thoſe things which are by all acknowledged ſins, ſuch as Rebellion, Injuſtice, Unmercifulneſs, Uncleanneſs or the like, he may conclude, it is utterly contrary to God and his Word, and then abhorrence, and not reverence belongs to it.

The Sacraments.

31. Fifthly, We are to expreſs our honouring of God by reverencing his Sacraments: Theſe are Two, Baptiſm and the Supper of the Lord. And this we are to do, Firſt, By our high eſteem of them. Secondly, By our reverent uſage of them; We are firſt to prize them at a high rate, looking on them, as the inſtruments of bringing to us the greateſt bleſ-

ſings we can receive. The firſt of them, Baptiſm, that enters us into Covenant with God, makes us members of Chriſt, and ſo gives us right to all thoſe precious benefits that flow from him, to wit, pardon of ſins, ſanctifying grace, and Heaven it ſelf, on condition we perform our parts of the Covenant. And as for the Lord's Supper, that is not only a ſign and remembrance of Chriſt and his Death; but it is actually the giving Chriſt, and all the fruits of his Death to every worthy Receiver; and therefore there is a moſt high eſtimation, and value due to each of them.

Of Baptiſm.

32. And not only ſo; but in the ſecond place we muſt ſhew our reverence in our uſage of them; and that, firſt, *Before*; ſecondly, *At*; thirdly, *After* the time of Receiving them. It is true that the Sacrament of *Baptiſm* being now adminiſtred to us, when we are Infants, it is not to be expected of us, that we ſhould in our own perſons, do any thing, either before or at the time of receiving it; Thoſe performances were ſtrictly required of all perſons, who were Baptized when they were of years. But for us, it ſuffices to give us this right to Baptiſm, that we are born within the pale of the Church, that is, of Chriſtian Parents; and all that is required at that time is, what we can only perform by others, they in our ſtead promiſing that when we come to years we will perform our parts of the Covenant. But by how much the leſs we are then able to do ſo much, the greater bond lies on us to perform thoſe after-duties required of us, by which we are to ſupply the want of the former.

The Vow of Baptiſm.

33. Now if you would know what thoſe duties are, look over thoſe promiſes which your Godfathers and Godmothers then made in your Name, and you may then learn them. I cannot give you them in a better form than that of our Churches Catechiſm, which tells us, *That our Godfathers and Godmothers did promiſe and vow three things in our Names*; firſt, *That we ſhould forſake the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh.* Where, by the Devil is meant, firſt, the worſhipping of all falſe gods, which is indeed but worſhipping the Devil: A ſin which at the time of Chriſt's coming into the World was very common, moſt part of Mankind then living in that vile Idolatry. And therefore when Baptiſm was firſt ordained, it was but needful to make the forſaking of thoſe falſe gods a principal part of the Vow. And though thoſe falſe worſhips are now much rarer, yet there was one ſpecial part of them, which may be feared to be yet too common among us, and that is all ſorts of uncleanneſs, which though we do not make Ceremonies of our Religion, as the Heathen did of theirs, yet the committing thereof is a moſt high provocation in God's eyes, ſuch as drew him to deſtroy whole *Cities with fire and brimſtone*, as you may read, *Gen.* 19. Nay, the *whole world with water*, *Gen.* 6. and will not fail to bring down judgments and ſtrange ones, on any that continue therein; and therefore the forſaking them well deſerves to be lookt on as an eſpecial part of this promiſe. Beſides this, all dealing with the Devil is here vowed againſt, whether it be by practiſing witchcraft our ſelves, or conſulting with thoſe that do, upon any occaſion whatever, as the recovery of our health, our goods, or whatever elſe; for this is a degree of the former ſin, it is the forſaking of the Lord, and ſetting up the Devil for our God, whilſt we go to him in our needs for help.

34. But we alſo renounce all the works of the Devil; and thoſe are either in general all thoſe that the Devil tempts us to, or elſe thoſe particular kinds of ſin which have moſt of his image on them; that is, thoſe which he himſelf moſt practiſes, ſuch are Pride (which brought him from being

an Angel of light to the accurſed condition he is now in) and Lying; he is, as our Saviour ſaith, *John* 8. 44. *A Lyar, and the Father of it*; and ſuch alſo are Malice and Envy, eſpecially Killing and Deſtroying of others, for he was a *murderer from the beginning*, *John* 8. 44. But above all there is nothing wherein we become ſo like him, as in tempting and drawing others to ſin, which is his whole trade and buſineſs, and if we make it any part of ours, we become like that *roaring Lyon, that goes about ſeeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8.

35. The ſecond thing we Vow to forſake, is the *Pomps and Vanities of this wicked world*. By the Pomps and Vanities there are ſeveral things meant; ſome of them ſuch as were uſed by the Heathens in ſome unlawful ſports of theirs, wherein we are not now ſo much concern'd, there being none of them remaining among us; but beſides that, there is meant all exceſs, either in Diet, or Sports, or Apparel, when we keep not thoſe due meaſures, which either by the general rules of Sobriety, or the particular circumſtances of our Qualities and Callings we are bound to. Next by the wicked World, we may underſtand, Firſt, The Wealth and Greatneſs of the World, which though we do not ſo totally renounce, that it is unlawful for a Chriſtian to be either Rich or Great, yet we thus far promiſe to forſake them, that we will not ſet our hearts upon them, nor either get or keep them by the leaſt unlawful means. Secondly, by the wicked World, we may underſtand the companies and cuſtoms of the World, which ſo far as they are wicked, we here renounce; that is, We promiſe never to be drawn by company to the commiſſion of a ſin, but rather to forſake the moſt delightful company, than to be enſnared by it; nor yet by cuſtom, but rather venture the ſhame of being thought ſingular, ridiculous perſons, walk as it were in a path by our ſelves, than put our ſelves into that *broad way that leads to deſtruction*, by giving our ſelves over to any ſinful cuſtom how common ſoever it be grown. If this part of our Vow were but throughly conſidered, it would arm us againſt moſt of the temptations the World offers us, company and cuſtom being the two ſpecial inſtruments by which it works on us.

36. A Third thing we renounce, is, *All the ſinful luſts of the fleſh*; where the fleſh is to be underſtood in that ſence wherein the Scripture often uſes it, for the fountain of all diſorder'd affections. For though thoſe unclean deſires which we ordinarily call the *luſts of the fleſh* are here meant, yet they are not the only things here contained, there being divers other things which the Scripture calls the *works of the fleſh*; I cannot better inform you of them than by ſetting down that liſt S. *Paul* gives of them, *Gal.* 5. 19, 20, 21. *Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Hereſies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenneſs, Revellings, and ſuch like*. This with thoſe other deſcriptions, you will find ſcattered in ſeveral places of Scripture, will ſhew you there are many things contained under this part of your Vow, the forſaking all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh.

37. The ſecond thing our Godfathers and Godmothers promiſed for us, was, that *We ſhould believe all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith*. Theſe we have ſummed up together in that which we call the Apoſtle's Creed, which ſince we promiſe to believe, we are ſuppoſed alſo to promiſe to learn them, and that not only the words, but likewiſe the plain ſence of them; for who can believe what he either never heard of, or knows not any thing of the meaning of it? Now by this believing is meant not only the conſenting to the truth of them, but alſo the living like them that do believe:

As for example, our believing that God created us ſhould make us live in that ſubjection and obedience to him which becomes Creatures to their Creator; the believing that Chriſt redeemed us, ſhould make us yield up our ſelves to him as his purchace, to be diſpoſed wholly by him, and employed only in his ſervice. The believing a judgment to come ſhould give us care ſo to walk that we may not be condemned in it. And our believing the life everlaſting, ſhould make us diligent ſo to employ our ſhort moment of time here, that our everlaſting life may be a life of joy, not of miſery to us. In this manner from all the Articles of the Creed, we are to draw motives to confirm us in all Chriſtian Practice, to which end it is that our learning and believing of them tends, and therefore without it we are very far from making good this part of our Vow, The *believing all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith.*

38. The laſt part of our Vow is, That we *ſhould keep God's holy will and Commandments, and walk in the ſame all the days of our lives.* Where by *our keeping God's holy will and Commandments,* is meant our doing of all thoſe things, which he hath made known to us to be his Will we ſhould perform; wherein he hath given us his holy Word to inſtruct us, and teach us what it is that he requires of us, and now he expects that we ſhould faithfully do it without favouring our ſelves in the breach of any one of his commands. And then in this entire obedience, we muſt walk *all the days of our lives:* that is, we muſt go on in a conſtant courſe of obeying God; not only fetch ſome few ſteps in his ways, but walk in them, and that not for ſome part of our time, but *all the days of our lives,* never turn out of them, but go on conſtantly in them, as long as we live in this world.

The ſtrict obligation of this Vow of Baptiſm.

39. Having now thus briefly explained to you this Vow made at your BAPTISM, all I ſhall add concerning it, is only to remember you how nearly you are concerned in the keeping it: and that firſt, in reſpect of juſtice, ſecondly, in reſpect of advantage and benefit. That you are in juſtice bound to it, I need ſay no more but that it is a promiſe, and you know juſtice requires of every Man the keeping of his promiſe. But then this is of all other promiſes the moſt ſolemn and binding, for it is a Vow, that is, a promiſe made to God; and therefore we are not only unjuſt, but forſworn, whenever we break any part of it.

40. But ſecondly, We are alſo highly concerned to keep it, in reſpect of our own benefit. I told you before, that Baptiſm entered us into Covenant with God; now a Covenant is made up of two parts, that is, ſomething promiſed by the one party, and ſomething by the other of the parties that make the Covenant. And if one of them break his part of the Covenant, that is, perform not what he hath agreed to, he can in no reaſon look that the other ſhould make good his. And ſo it is here, God doth indeed promiſe thoſe benefits before mentioned, and that is his part of the Covenant. But then we alſo undertake to perform the ſeveral things contained in this Vow of Baptiſm, and that is our part of it, and unleſs we do indeed perform them, God is not tied to make good his, and ſo we forfeit all thoſe precious benefits and advantages, we are left in that natural and miſerable eſtate of ours, *children of wrath, enemies to God, and heirs of eternal damnation.* And now what can be the pleaſure that any or all ſins can afford us, that can make us the leaſt degree of recompence for ſuch a loſs, the loſs of God's favour and grace here, and the loſs of our own Souls hereafter? For as our Saviour ſaith, *Mark* 8. 36. *What ſhall it profit a man if, he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul?* Yet this mad bargain we make whenever we break any part of this our Vow of Baptiſm. It therefore

moſt nearly concerns us to conſider ſadly of it, to remember that every ſin we commit is a direct breach of this our Vow; and therefore when thou art tempted to any ſin, ſeem it never ſo light, ſay not of it as *Lot* did of *Zoar*, *Gen.* 19. 20. *Is it not a little one?* But conſider that whatever it is, thou haſt in thy Baptiſm vowed againſt it, and then be it never ſo little it draws a great one at the heels of it, no leſs than that of being forſworn, which whoever commits, God hath in the third Commandment pronounced, *He will not hold him guiltleſs.* And that we may the better keep this Vow, it will be very uſeful often to repeat to our ſelves the ſeveral branches of it, that ſo we may ſtill have it ready in our minds to ſet againſt all temptations; and ſurely it is ſo excellent a weapon, that if we do not either caſt it aſide, or uſe it very negligently, it will enable us by God's help to put to flight our ſpiritual adverſary. And this is that reverence we are to pay to this firſt Sacrament, that of Baptiſm.

SUNDAY III.

Of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, of preparation before, as Examination; of Repentance, Faith, Obedience; of duties to be done at the Receiving, and afterwards, &c.

The Lord's Supper.

Sect. 1. NOW follows the Reverence due to the Sacrament of the LORD's SUPPER; and in this I muſt follow my firſt diviſion, and ſet down firſt, what is to be done Before; ſecondly, At; and thirdly, After the time of Receiving; for in this Sacrament we cannot be excuſed from any one of theſe, though in the former we are.

Things to be done before receiving.

Examination.

2. And firſt, for that which is to be done Before, S. *Paul* tells us it is Examination, 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. *But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.* But before I proceed to the particulars of this Examination, I muſt in the general tell you, that the ſpecial buſineſs we have to do in this Sacrament, is to repeat and renew that Covenant we made with God in our Baptiſm, which we having many ways grievouſly broken, it pleaſes God in his great mercy to ſuffer us to come to the renewing of it in this Sacrament, which if we do in ſincerity of heart, he hath promiſed to accept us, and to give us all thoſe benefits in this, which he was ready to beſtow in the other Sacrament, if we had not by our own fault forfeited them. Since then the renewing of our Covenant is our buſineſs at this time, it follows that theſe three things are neceſſary towards it: Firſt, That we underſtand what the Covenant is; Secondly, That we conſider what our Breaches of it have been; and Thirdly, That we reſolve upon a ſtrict obſervance of it, for the reſt of our Life. And the trying our ſelves in every one of theſe particulars is that Examination which is required of us before we come to this Sacrament.

Of our knowledge.

3. And firſt we are to examine whether we underſtand what this Covenant is; this is exceeding neceſſary, as being the foundation of both the other, for it is neither poſſible to diſcover our paſt ſins, nor to ſettle purpoſes againſt them for the future without it. Let this therefore be your firſt buſineſs, Try whether you rightly underſtand what that Covenant is which you entred into at your Baptiſm, what be the mercies promiſed on God's part, and the Duties on yours. And becauſe the Covenant made with each of us in Baptiſm is only the applying to our particulars the Covenant made by God in Chriſt with all mankind in general, you are to conſider whether you underſtand that; if you do not, you muſt immediately

ſeek for inſtruction in it. And till you have means of gaining better, look over what is briefly ſaid in the entrance to this Treatiſe concerning the SECOND COVENANT, which is the foundation of that Covenant which God makes with us in our Baptiſm. And becauſe you will there find, that obedience to all God's Commands is the condition required of us, and is alſo that which we expreſly Vow in our Baptiſm, it is neceſſary you ſhould likewiſe know what thoſe Commands of God are. Therefore if you find you are ignorant of them, never be at reſt till you have got your ſelf inſtructed in them, and have gained ſuch a meaſure of knowledge as may direct you to do that *Whole Duty of Man*, which God requires. And the giving thee this inſtruction is the only aim of this Book, which the more ignorant thou art, the more earneſtly I ſhall intreat thee diligently to read. And if thou haſt heretofore approacht to this Holy Sacrament in utter ignorance of theſe neceſſary things, bewail thy ſin in ſo doing, but preſume not to come again till thou haſt by gaining this neceſſary knowledge fitted thy ſelf for it, which thou muſt haſten to do. For though no man muſt come to the Sacrament in ſuch ignorance, yet if he wilfully continue in it, that will be no excuſe to him for keeping from this Holy Table.

Sins. 4. The ſecond part of our examination is concerning our breaches of this Covenant; and here thou wilt find the uſe of that knowledge I ſpake of. For there is no way of diſcovering what our ſins have been, but by trying our Actions by that which ſhould be the rule of them, the Law of God. *Several ſorts.* When therefore thou ſetteſt to this part of Examination, remember what are the ſeveral branches of thy duty, and then ask thy own heart in every particular, how thou haſt performed it. And content not thy ſelf with knowing in general, that thou haſt broken God's Law, but do thy utmoſt to diſcover in what particulars thou haſt done ſo. Recal, as well as thou canſt, all the paſſages of thy life, and in each of them conſider what part of that duty hath been tranſgreſt by it. And that not only in the groſſer act, but in word alſo; nay, even in thy moſt ſecret thoughts: For though Man's Law reaches not to them, yet God's doth; ſo that whatever he forbids in the act, he forbids likewiſe in the thoughts and deſires, and ſees them as clearly as our moſt publick acts. This particular ſearch is exceeding neceſſary; for there is no promiſe of forgiveneſs of any ſin but only to him that confeſſeth and forſaketh it. Now to both theſe it is neceſſary that we have a diſtinct and particular knowledge of our ſins. For how can he either confeſs his ſin, that knows not his guilt of it? Or, how can he reſolve to forſake it, that diſcerns not himſelf to have formerly cleaved to it? Therefore we may ſurely conclude, that this Examination is not only uſeful but neceſſary towards a full and complete Repentance; for he that does not take this particular view of his ſins, will be likely to repent but by halves, which will never avail him towards his pardon; nothing but an entire forſaking of every evil way, being ſufficient for that. But ſurely of all other times it concerns us, that when we come to the Sacrament, our repentance be full and complete; and therefore this ſtrict ſearch of our own hearts is then eſpecially neceſſary. For although it be true, that it is not poſſible by all our diligence to diſcover or remember every ſin of our whole lives, and though it be alſo true, that what is ſo unavoidably hid from us, may be forgiven without any more particular confeſſion than that of *David*, Pſal. 19. 12. *Cleanſe thou me from my ſecret faults*: yet this will be no plea for us, if they come to be ſecret only, becauſe we are negligent in ſearching. Therefore take heed of deceiving thy ſelf in this weighty buſi-

neſs,

neſs, but ſearch thy Soul to the bottom, without which it is impoſſible that the wounds thereof ſhould ever be throughly cured.

5. And as you are to enquire thus narrowly concerning the ſeveral Sorts of Sins, ſo alſo muſt you concerning the degrees of them, for there are divers circumſtances which increaſe and heighten the Sin. Of this ſort there are many; as firſt, when we ſin againſt knowledge, that is, when we certainly know ſuch a thing to be a ſin, yet for the preſent pleaſure or profit (or whatever other motive) adventure on it. This is by Chriſt himſelf adjudged to be a great heightning of the ſin. *He that knows his Maſter's will and doth it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes, Luke* 12. 47. Secondly, When we ſin with deliberation, that is, When we do not fall into it of a ſudden, ere we are aware, but have time to conſider of it, this is another degree of the ſin. But, thirdly, a yet higher is, When we do it againſt the Reſiſtances and checks of our own Conſcience, when that at the time tells us, This thing thou oughteſt not to do: Nay, lays before us the danger as well as the ſin of it, yet in ſpight of theſe admonitions of Conſcience we go on and commit the ſin; this is a huge increaſe of it, ſuch as will raiſe the leaſt ſin into a moſt high provocation. For it is plain, a ſin thus committed muſt be a wilful one, and then be the matter of it never ſo light, it is moſt hainous in God's eyes. Nay this is a circumſtance of ſuch force, that it may make an indifferent action that is in it ſelf no ſin, become one. For though my Conſcience ſhould erre in telling me ſuch a thing were unlawful, yet ſo long as I were ſo perſwaded, it were ſin for me to do that thing; for in that caſe my Will conſents to the doing a thing which I believe to be diſpleaſing to God, and God (who judges us by our Wills, not Underſtandings) imputes it to me as a ſin, as well as if the thing were in it ſelf unlawful. And therefore ſurely we may conclude, that any thing which is in it ſelf ſinful, is made much more ſo by being committed againſt the checks of Conſcience. A fourth aggravation of ſin is when it hath been often repeated, for then there is not only the guilt of ſo many more Acts, but every Act grows alſo ſo much worſe, and more inexcuſable. We always judge thus in faults committed againſt our ſelves, we can forgive a ſingle injury more eaſily than the ſame when it hath been repeated; and the oftner it hath been ſo repeated, the more hainous we account it. And ſo ſurely it is in faults againſt God alſo. Fifthly, The ſins which have been committed after Vows and Reſolutions of amendment are yet more grievous; for that contains alſo the breaking of thoſe promiſes. Somewhat of this there is in every wilful ſin, becauſe every ſuch is a breach of that Vow we make at Baptiſm. But beſides that, we have ſince bound our ſelves by new Vows, if at no other time, yet ſurely at our coming to the Lord's Supper, that being (as was formerly ſaid) purpoſely to repeat our Vows of Baptiſm. And the more of theſe Vows we have made, ſo much the greater is our guilt, if we fall back to any ſin we then renounced. This is a thing very well worth weighing, and therefore examine thy ſelf particularly at thy approach to the Sacrament concerning thy breaches of former Vows made at the Holy Table. And if upon any other occaſion, as ſickneſs, trouble of mind, or the like, thou haſt at any time made any other, call thy ſelf to a ſtrict account how thou haſt performed them alſo, and remember that every ſin committed againſt ſuch Vows, is beſides its own natural guilt, a Perjury likewiſe. Sixthly, A yet higher ſtep is, when a Sin hath been ſo often committed that we are come to a cuſtom and habit of it: and that is indeed a high degree.

6. Yet even of Habits ſome are worſe than others, as firſt, If it be ſo confirmed that we are come to a hardneſs of heart, have no ſenſe at all of the ſin: Or, ſecondly, If we go on in it againſt any extraordinary means uſed by God to reform us, ſuch as ſickneſs, or any other affliction which ſeems to be ſent on purpoſe for our reclaiming. Or, thirdly, If all Reproofs and Exhortations either of Miniſters or private friends work not on us, but either make us angry at our reprovers, or ſet us on defending the ſin. Or laſtly, If this ſinful habit be ſo ſtrong in us as to give us a love to the ſin, not only in our ſelves but in others; if as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 1. 31. *We do not only do the things, but take pleaſure in them that do them*, and therefore entice and draw as many as we can into the ſame ſins with us: Then it is riſen to the higheſt ſtep of wickedneſs, and is to be lookt on as the utmoſt degree both of ſin and danger. Thus you ſee how you are to examine your ſelves concerning your ſins, in each of which you are to conſider how many of theſe heightning circumſtances there have been, that ſo you may a-right meaſure the hainouſneſs of them.

Humiliation.

7. Now the end of this Examination is, to bring you to ſuch a ſight of your ſins, as may truly humble you, make you ſenſible of your own danger, that have provoked ſo great a Majeſty, who is able ſo ſadly to revenge himſelf upon you, and that will ſurely even to the moſt carnal heart appear a reaſonable ground of ſorrow. But that is not all; it muſt likewiſe bring you to a ſenſe and abhorrence of your baſeneſs and ingratitude, that have thus offended ſo good and gracious a God, that have made ſuch unworthy and unkind returns to thoſe tender and rich mercies of his. And this conſideration eſpecially muſt melt your hearts into a deep ſorrow and contrition, the degree whereof muſt be in ſome meaſure anſwerable to the degree of your ſins. And the greater it is, provided it be not ſuch as ſhuts up the hope of God's Mercy, the more acceptable it is to God, who hath promiſed not *to deſpiſe a broken and contrite heart*, *Pſal.* 51. 17. And the more likely it will be alſo to bring us to amendment: For if we have once felt what the ſmart of a wounded Spirit is, we ſhall have the leſs mind to venture upon ſin again.

Contrition.

8. For when we are tempted with any the ſhort pleaſures of ſin, we may then out of our own experience ſet againſt them the ſharp pains and terrors of an accuſing Conſcience, which will to any that hath felt them be able infinitely to outweigh them. Endeavour therefore to bring your Soul to this melting temper, to this deep unfeigned ſorrow, and that not only for the danger you have brought upon your ſelf; for though that be a conſideration which may and ought to work ſadneſs in us, yet where that alone is the motive of our ſorrow, it is not that ſorrow which will avail us for pardon; and the reaſon of it is clear, for that ſorrow proceeds only from the love of our ſelves, we are ſorry becauſe we are like to ſmart. But the ſorrow of a true penitent muſt be joyned alſo with the love of God, and that will make us grieve for having offended him, though there were no puniſhment to fall upon our ſelves. The way then to ſtir up this ſorrow in us, is firſt, To ſtir up our love of God, by repeating to our ſelves the many gracious acts of his mercy towards us, particularly that of his ſparing us, and not cutting us off in our ſins. Conſider with thy ſelf how many and how great provocations thou haſt offered him, perhaps in a continued courſe of many years wilful diſobedience, for which thou mighteſt with perfect juſtice have been ere this ſent quick into Hell: Nay, poſſibly thou haſt before thee many examples of leſs ſinners than thou art, who have been ſuddenly ſnatcht away in the midſt of their ſins. And what

cauſe canſt thou give, why thou haſt thus long eſcaped, but only becauſe his eye hath ſpared thee? And what cauſe of that ſparing, but his tender compaſſions towards thee, his unwillingneſs that thou ſhouldſt periſh? This conſideration if it be preſt home upon thy Soul, cannot chuſe (if thy heart be not as hard as the nether Milſtone) but awake ſomewhat of love in thee towards this gracious, this long-ſuffering God, and that love will certainly make it appear to thee, that it is an *evil thing and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord, Jer.* 2. 19. That thou haſt made ſuch wretched requitals of ſo great mercy; it will make thee both aſhamed and angry at thy ſelf that thou haſt been ſuch an unthankful Creature. But if the conſideration of this one ſort of mercy, God's forbearance only, be ſuch an engagement and help to this godly ſorrow, what will then be the multitude of thoſe other mercies which every man is able to reckon up to himſelf? And therefore let every man be as particular in it as he can, call to mind as many of them as he is able, that ſo he may attain to the greater degree of true Contrition.

9. And to all theſe endeavours muſt be added earneſt prayers to God, that he by his Holy Spirit would ſhew you your ſins, and ſoften your hearts, that you may throughly bewail and lament them.

Confeſſion. 10. To this muſt be joyned an humble confeſſion of ſins to God, and that not only in general, but alſo in particular, as far as your memory of them will reach, and that with all theſe heightning circumſtances of them, which you have by the forementioned examination diſcovered. Yea, even ſecret and forgotten ſins muſt in general be acknowledged; for it is certain there are multitudes of ſuch; ſo that it is neceſſary for every one of us to ſay with *David, Pſal.* 19. 12. *Who can underſtand his errors? Cleanſe thou me from my ſecret faults.* When you have thus confeſt your ſins with this hearty ſorrow, and ſincere hatred of them, you may then (and not before) be concluded to feel ſo much of your diſeaſe, that it will be ſeaſonable to apply the remedy.

Faith. 11. In the next place therefore you are to look on him whom God *hath ſet forth to be the propitiation for our ſins,* Rom. 3. 25. *even Jeſus Chriſt that Lamb of God, who taketh away the ſins of the world, Joh.* 1. 29. And earneſtly beg of God, that by his moſt precious blood your ſins may be waſhed away; and that God would for his ſake be reconciled to you. And this you are to believe will ſurely be done, if you do for the reſt of your time forſake your ſins, and give your ſelves up ſincerely to obey God in all his Commands. But without that, it is vain to hope any benefit from Chriſt, or his ſufferings. And therefore the next part of your preparation muſt be the ſetting thoſe reſolutions of obedience, which I told you was the third thing you are to examine your ſelves of before your approach to the holy Sacrament.

Reſolutions of Obedience. 12. Concerning the particulars of this Reſolution, I need ſay no more, but that it muſt anſwer every part, and branch of our duty; that is, we muſt not only in general reſolve that we will obſerve God's Commandments, but we muſt reſolve it for every Commandment by it ſelf; and eſpecially where we have found our ſelves moſt to have failed heretofore, there eſpecially to renew our reſolutions. And herein it nearly concerns us to look that theſe reſolutions be ſincere and unfeigned, and not only ſuch ſlight ones as people uſe out of cuſtom to put on at their coming to the Sacrament, which they never think of keeping afterwards. For this is a certain truth, that whoſoever comes to this Holy Table without an entire hatred of every ſin, comes unworthily; and it is as ſure, that he that doth entirely hate all ſin, will reſolve to forſake it, for you know forſaking naturally follows hatred, no man willingly abides with the thing or perſon he hates. And therefore he that doth not ſo reſolve, as that God the ſearcher of hearts may approve it as ſincere, cannot be ſuppoſed to hate ſin, and ſo cannot be a worthy receiver of that holy Sacrament. Therefore try your reſolutions throughly, that you deceive not your ſelves in them; it is your own great danger, if you do; for it is certain you cannot deceive God, nor gain acceptation from him by any thing which is not perfectly hearty and unfeigned.

Of the means.

13. Now as you are to reſolve on this new Obedience, ſo you are likewiſe to reſolve on the means, which may aſſiſt you in the performance of it. And therefore conſider in every duty, what are the means that may help you in it, and reſolve to make uſe of them, how uneaſie ſoever they be to your fleſh; ſo on the other ſide conſider what things they are, that are likely to lead you to ſin, and reſolve to ſhun and avoid them: This you are to do in reſpect of all ſins whatever, but eſpecially in thoſe, whereof you have formerly been guilty. For there it will not be hard for you to find, by what ſteps and degrees you were drawn into it, what Company, what Occaſion it was that enſnared you, as alſo to what ſort of Temptations you are apteſt to yield. And therefore you muſt particularly fence your ſelf againſt the ſin, by avoiding thoſe occaſions of it.

14. But it is not enough that you reſolve you will do all this hereafter, but you muſt inſtantly ſet to it, and begin the courſe by doing at the preſent whatſoever you have opportunity of doing. And there are ſeveral things which you may, nay, muſt do at the preſent, before you come to the Sacrament.

Preſent renouncing of ſin.

15. As firſt, you muſt caſt off every ſin, not bring any one unmortified luſt with you to that Table; for it is not enough to purpoſe to caſt them off afterwards, but you muſt then actually do it by withdrawing all degrees of love and affection from them; you muſt then give a bill of divorce to all your old beloved ſins, or elſe you are in no way fit to be married to Chriſt. The reaſon of this is clear; for this Sacrament is our ſpiritual Nouriſhment; now before we can receive ſpiritual Nouriſhment we muſt have ſpiritual Life, (for no Man gives food to a dead perſon.) But whoſoever continues not only in the act, but in the love of any one known ſin, hath no ſpiritual Life, but is in God's account no better than a dead carkaſs, and therefore cannot receive that ſpiritual food. It is true he may eat the Bread, and drink the Wine, but he receives not Chriſt, but inſtead of him, that which is moſt dreadful; the Apoſtle will tell you what, 1 *Cor.* 11. 29. *He eats and drinks his own damnation.* Therefore you ſee how great a neceſſity lies on you thus actually to put off every ſin before you come to this Table.

Imbracing vertue.

16. And the ſame neceſſity lies on you for a ſecond thing to be done at this time, and that is, the putting your ſoul into a Heavenly and Chriſtian temper; by poſſeſſing it with all thoſe Graces which may render it acceptable in the eyes of God. For when you have turned out Satan and his accurſed train, you muſt not let your Soul lie empty; if you do, Chriſt tells you, *Luke* 11. 26. He will *quickly return again, and your laſt eſtate ſhall be worſe than your firſt.* But you muſt by earneſt Prayer invite into it the Holy Spirit with his Graces, or if they be in ſome degree there already, you muſt pray that he will yet more fully poſſeſs it, and you muſt quicken and ſtir them up.

Quickening of Graces.

17. As for example, you muſt quicken your Humility, by conſidering your many and great ſins: Your Faith, by meditating on God's promiſes to all penitent ſinners: Your Love to God, by conſidering his Mercies, eſpecially thoſe remembred in the Sacrament, his giving Chriſt to die for us; and your love to your Neighbour, nay to your Enemies by conſidering that great example of his ſuffering for us that were Enemies to him. And it is moſt particularly required of us when we come to this Table that we copy out this pattern of his in a perfect forgiveneſs of all that have offended us, and not only forgiveneſs, but ſuch a kindneſs alſo as will expreſs it ſelf in all offices of love and friendſhip to them.

Charity.

18. And if you have formerly ſo quite forgot that Bleſſed Example of his, as to do the direct contrary; if you have done any unkindneſs or injury to any perſon, then you are to ſeek forgiveneſs from him: And to that end, firſt acknowledge your fault, and ſecondly, reſtore to him, to the utmoſt of your power, whatſoever you have deprived him of, either in goods or credit. This Reconciliation with our Brethren is abſolutely neceſſary towards the making any of our ſervices acceptable with God, as appears by that precept of Chriſt, *Matth.* 5. 23, 24. *If thou bring thy gift to the Altar, and there remembreſt that thy brother hath ought againſt thee, leave there thy gift before the Altar, and go thy way, firſt be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* Where you ſee, that though the gift be already at the Altar, it muſt rather be left there unoffered, than be offered by a man that is not at perfect peace with his Neighbour. And if this Charity be ſo neceſſary in all our ſervices, much more in this, where by a joint partaking in the ſame holy Myſteries, we ſignifie our being united and knit not only to Chriſt our head, but alſo to each other as fellow-members. And therefore if we come with any malice in our hearts, we commit an act of the higheſt Hypocriſie, by making a ſolemn profeſſion in the Sacrament of that Charity and brotherly Love, whereof our hearts are quite void.

Devotion.

19. Another moſt neceſſary Grace at this time is that of Devotion, for the raiſing whereof we muſt allow our ſelves ſome time to withdraw from our worldly affairs, and wholly to ſet our ſelves to this buſineſs of preparation; one very ſpecial part of which preparation lies in raiſing up our Souls to a devout and heavenly temper. And to that it is moſt neceſſary that we caſt off all thoughts of the world, for they will be ſure as ſo many clogs to hinder our Souls in their mounting towards heaven. A ſpecial exerciſe of this devotion is Prayer, wherein we muſt be very frequent and earneſt at our coming to the Sacrament, this being one great inſtrument whereby we muſt obtain all thoſe other graces required in our preparation. Therefore be ſure this be not omitted; for if you uſe never ſo much endeavour beſides, and leave out this, it is the going to work in your own ſtrength without looking to God for his help, and then it is impoſſible you ſhould proſper in it: *For we are not able of our ſelves to think any thing, as of our ſelves, but our ſufficiency is of God,* 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. Therefore be inſtant with him ſo to aſſiſt you with his grace, that you may come ſo fitted to this Holy Table, that you may be partakers of the benefits there reached out to all worthy receivers.

Neceſſity of theſe Graces.

20. Theſe and all other ſpiritual Graces our Souls muſt be cloathed with when we come to this Feaſt; for this is that Wedding-garment, without which whoſoever comes, is like to have the entertainment mentioned in the parable of him who came to the marriage without a *wedding-garment*, Matth. 22. 13. *who was caſt into outer darkneſs, where is weeping and gnaſhing*

gnaſhing of teeth; for though it is poſſible he may ſit it out at the preſent, and not be ſnatched from the Table, yet S. *Paul* aſſures him, *he drinks damation to himſelf*, and how ſoon it may fall on him is uncertain: But it is ſure, it will, if repentance prevent it not; and as ſure that whenever it does come, it will be *intolerable*; *For who among us can dwell with everlaſting burnings?* Iſa. 33. 14.

The uſefulneſs of a ſpiritual Guide.

21. I ſhall add but one thing more concerning the things which are to be done before the Sacrament, and that is an advice, that if any perſon upon a ſerious view of himſelf cannot ſatisfie his own Soul of his ſincerity, and ſo doubts whether he may come to the Sacrament, he do not reſt wholly on his own judgment in the caſe; for if he be a truly humbled Soul, it is likely he may judge too hardly of himſelf; if he be not, it is odds, but if he be left to the ſatisfying his own doubts, he will quickly bring himſelf to paſs too favourable a ſentence. Or whether he be the one or the other, if he come to the Sacrament in that doubt, he certainly plunges himſelf into farther doubts and ſcruples, if not into ſin: On the other ſide, if he forbear becauſe of it, if that fear be a cauſleſs one, then he groundleſly abſents himſelf from that Holy Ordinance, and ſo deprives his Soul of the benefits of it. Therefore in the midſt of ſo many dangers which attend the miſtake of himſelf, I would, as I ſaid before, exhort him not to truſt to his own judgment, but to make known his caſe to ſome diſcreet and godly Miniſter, and rather be guided by his, who will probably (if the caſe be duly and without any diſguiſe diſcovered to him) be better able to judge of him, than he of himſelf. This is the counſel the Church gives in the Exhortation before the Communion, where it is adviſed, that if any by other means there forementioned, *cannot quiet his own Conſcience, but require farther counſel and comfort*, then *let him go to ſome diſcreet and learned Miniſter of God's Word, and open his grief, that he may receive ſuch ghoſtly counſel, advice and comfort, that his Conſcience may be relieved,* &c. This is ſurely ſuch advice as ſhould not be neglected neither at the time of coming to the Sacrament, nor any other, when we are under any fear or reaſons of doubt concerning the ſtate of our Souls. And for want of this many have run into very great miſchief, having let the doubt feſter ſo long, that it hath either plunged them into deep diſtreſſes of Conſcience, or, which is worſe, they have to ſtill that diſquiet within them, betaken themſelves to all ſinful pleaſures, and ſo quite caſt off all care of their Souls.

Not to be aſhamed to diſcover our ſelves to one.

22. But to all this it will perhaps be ſaid, That this cannot be done without diſcovering the nakedneſs and blemiſhes of the Soul, and there is ſhame in that, and therefore men are unwilling to do it. But to that I anſwer, That it is very unreaſonable that ſhould be a hindrance: For firſt, I ſuppoſe you are to chuſe only ſuch a perſon as will faithfully keep any ſecret you ſhall commit to him, and ſo it can be no publick ſhame you can fear. And if it be in reſpect of that ſingle perſon, you need not fear that neither; for ſuppoſing him a godly Man, he will not think the worſe of you, but the better, that you are ſo deſirous to ſet all right between God and your Soul. But if indeed there were ſhame in it, yet as long as it may be a means to cure both your trouble and your ſin too (as certainly godly and faithful counſel may tend much to both) that ſhame ought to be deſpiſed; and it is ſure it would, if we loved our Souls as well as our Bodies: For in bodily diſeaſes, be they never ſo foul or ſhameful, we count him a fool who will rather miſs the cure than diſcover it; and then it muſt here be ſo much a greater folly, by how much the Soul is more precious than the Body.

As neceſſary to the confident as to the doubtful.

23. But God knows it is not only doubting perſons to whom this advice might be uſeful, there are others of another ſort, whoſe confidence is their diſeaſe, who preſume very groundleſly of the goodneſs of their eſtates: And for thoſe it were moſt happy, if they could be brought to hear ſome more equal judgments than their own in this ſo weighty a buſineſs. The truth is, we are generally ſo apt to favour our ſelves, that it might be very uſeful for the moſt, eſpecially the more ignorant ſort, ſometimes to adviſe with a ſpiritual Guide; to enable them to paſs right judgments on themſelves; and not only ſo, but to receive directions, how to ſubdue and mortifie thoſe ſins they are moſt inclined to, which is a matter of ſo much difficulty, that we have no reaſon to deſpiſe any means that may help us in it.

At the time of Receiving. Meditation of thy unworthineſs.

24. I have now gone through thoſe ſeveral parts of duty we are to perform *Before* our Receiving; in the next place, I am to tell you, what is to be done *At the time of Receiving.* When thou art at the Holy Table; Firſt, Humble thy ſelf in an unfeigned acknowledgment of thy great unworthineſs to be admitted there; and to that purpoſe remember again between God and thine own Soul, ſome of thy greateſt, and fouleſt ſins, thy breaches of former Vows made at that Table, eſpecially ſince thy laſt Receiving.

The ſufferings of Chriſt.

Then meditate on thoſe bitter Sufferings of Chriſt which are ſet out to us in the Sacrament: When thou ſeeſt the Bread broken, remember how his bleſſed Body was torn with nails upon the Croſs; when thou ſeeſt the Wine poured out, remember how his precious Blood was ſpilt there; and then conſider, it was thy ſins that cauſed both. And here think how unworthy a wretch thou art to have done that which occaſioned ſuch torments to Him: how much worſe than his very Crucifiers. They crucified him once, but thou haſt, as much as in thee lay, crucified him daily. They crucified him becauſe they knew him not, but thou haſt known both what he is in himſelf, *The Lord of Glory,* and what he is to thee, a moſt tender and merciful Saviour; and yet thou haſt ſtill continued thus to crucifie him a-freſh. Conſider this, and let it work in thee, firſt, a great ſorrow for thy ſins paſt, and then a great hatred and a firm reſolution againſt them for the time to come.

The atonement wrought by them.

25. When thou haſt a while thus thought on theſe ſufferings of Chriſt for the increaſing thy Humility and Contrition; then, in the ſecond place think of them again, to ſtir up thy Faith; look on him as the Sacrifice offered up for thy ſins, for the appeaſing of God's wrath, and procuring his favour and mercies toward thee. And therefore believingly, yet humbly beg of God to accept of that Satisfaction made by his innocent and beloved Son, and for the merits thereof to pardon thee whatever is paſt, and to be fully reconciled to thee.

The thankfulneſs owing for them.

26. In the third place conſider them again to raiſe thy Thankfulneſs. Think how much both of ſhame and pain he there endured, but eſpecially thoſe great agonies of his Soul, which drew from him that bitter cry, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? Matth.* 27. 45. Now all this he ſuffered only to keep thee from periſhing. And therefore conſider what unexpreſſible thanks thou oweſt him; and endeavour to raiſe thy Soul to the moſt zealous and hearty Thankſgiving: For this is a principal part of duty at this time, the praiſing and magnifying that mercy which hath redeemed us by ſo dear a price. Therefore it will here well become thee to ſay with *David, I will take the Cup of Salvation, and will call upon the Name of the Lord.*

The great love of Chriſt in them.

27. Fourthly, Look on theſe ſufferings of Chriſt to ſtir up this love; and ſurely there cannot be a more effectual means of doing it; for here the

love of Chriſt to thee is moſt manifeſt, according to that of the Apoſtle, 1 *John* 3. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God towards us, becauſe he laid down his life for us.* And that even the higheſt degree of love, for as himſelf tells us, *John* 15. 13. *Greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friend.* Yet even greater love than this had he; for he not only died, but died the moſt painful and moſt reproachful death, and that not for his friends, but for his utter enemies. And therefore if after all this love on his part there be no return of love on ours, we are worſe than the vileſt ſort of men, for even the *Publicans*, Matth. 5. 46. *Love thoſe that love them.* Here therefore chide and reproach thy ſelf, that thy love to him is ſo faint and cool, when his to thee was ſo zealous and affectionate. And endeavour to enkindle this holy flame in thy Soul, to love him in ſuch a degree, that thou mayſt be ready to copy out his example, to part with all things, yea, even life it ſelf whenever he calls for it, that is, whenſoever thy obedience to any command of his ſhall lay thee open to thoſe ſufferings. But in the mean time to reſolve never again to make any league with his enemies, to entertain or harbour any ſin in thy breaſt. But if there have any ſuch hitherto remained with thee, make this the ſeaſon to kill and crucifie it; offer it up at this inſtant a ſacrifice to him who was ſacrificed for thee, and particularly for that very end that *he might redeem thee from all iniquity.* Therefore here make thy ſolemn reſolutions to forſake every ſin, particularly, thoſe into which thou haſt moſt frequently fallen. And that thou mayeſt indeed perform thoſe reſolutions, earneſtly beg of this crucified Saviour, that he will, by the power of his death, mortifie and kill all thy corruptions.

The benefits of the New Covenant ſealed in the Sacrament.

28. When thou art about to receive the conſecrated Bread and Wine, remember that God now offers to ſeal to thee that New Covenant made with Mankind in his Son. For ſince he gives that his Son in the Sacrament, he gives with him all the benefits of that Covenant, to wit, pardon of Sin, ſanctifying Grace, and a title to an eternal inheritance. And here be aſtoniſhed at the infinite goodneſs of God, who reaches out to thee ſo precious a treaſure. But then remember that this is all but on condition, that thou perform thy part of the Covenant. And therefore ſettle in thy Soul the moſt ſerious purpoſe of obedience, and then with all poſſible devotion joyn with the Miniſter in that ſhort, but excellent Prayer, uſed at the inſtant of giving the Sacrament, *The body of our Lord*, &c.

Upon Receiving give thanks.

29. So ſoon as thou haſt Received, offer up thy devouteſt Praiſes for that great mercy, together with thy moſt earneſt Prayers for ſuch aſſiſtance of God's Spirit, as may enable thee to perform the Vow thou haſt now made. Then remembring that Chriſt is *a propitiation not for our ſins only, but alſo for the ſins of the whole world*; let thy charity reach as far as his hath done, and pray for all mankind, that every one may receive the benefit of that Sacrifice of His; commend alſo to God the eſtate of the Church, that particularly whereof thou art a Member. And forget not to pray for all to whom thou oweſt Obedience, both in Church and State; and ſo go on to pray for ſuch particular perſons as either thy Relations or their wants ſhall preſent to thee. If there be any Collection for the Poor (as there always ought to be at this time) give freely according to thy ability; or if by the default of others, there be no ſuch Collection, yet do thou privately deſign ſomething towards the relief of thy poor Brethren, and be ſure to give it the next fitting opportunity that offers it ſelf. All this thou muſt contrive to do in the time that others are receiving, that ſo when the publick Prayers after the Adminiſtration begin, thou mayeſt be

Pray.

ready to joyn in them, which thou muſt likewiſe take care to do with all devotion. Thus much for behaviour at the time of Receiving.

After the Sacrament.

30. Now follows the third and laſt thing, that is, what thou art to do After thy Receiving. That which is immediately to be done, is as ſoon as thou art retired from the Congregation, to offer up again to God thy Sacrifice of Praiſe for all thoſe precious mercies conveyed to thee in that holy Sacrament, as alſo humbly to entreat the continued aſſiſtance of his grace to enable thee to make good all thoſe purpoſes of obedience thou haſt now made. And in whatſoever thou knoweſt thy ſelf moſt in danger, either in reſpect of any former habit, or natural inclination, there eſpecially deſire and earneſtly beg his aid.

Private Prayer and Thanksgiving.

Not presently to fall to worldly affairs.

31. When thou haſt done thus, do not preſently let thy ſelf looſe to thy worldly cares and buſineſs, but ſpend all that day, either in meditating, praying, reading, good conferences, or the like; ſo as may beſt keep up that holy flame that is enkindled in thy heart. Afterwards when thy calling requires thee to fall to thy uſual affairs, do it, but yet ſtill remember that thou haſt a greater buſineſs than that upon thy hands; that is, the performing of all thoſe promiſes, thou ſo lately madeſt to God; and therefore whatever thy outward employments are, let thy heart be ſet on that, keep all the particulars of thy reſolutions in memory, and whenever thou art tempted to any of thy old ſins, then conſider, this is the thing thou ſo ſolemnly vowedſt againſt, and withal remember what a horrible guilt it will be if thou ſhouldeſt now wilfully do any thing contrary to that Vow; yea; and what a horrible miſchief alſo it will be to thy ſelf. For at thy receiving, God and thou entredſt into Covenant, into a league of friendſhip and kindneſs. And as long as thou keepeſt in that friendſhip with God, thou art ſafe, all the malice of Men or Devils can do thee no harm: For as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 8.31. *If God be for us, who can be againſt us?* But if thou breakeſt this league (as thou certainly doeſt, if thou yieldeſt to any wilful ſin) then God and thou art Enemies, and if all the world then were for thee, it could not avail thee.

To keep thy reſolutions ſtill in memory.

The danger of breaking them.

Making God thy enemy.

Thy own Conſcience.

32. Nay, thou wilt get an Enemy within thy own boſom, thy Conſcience accuſing and upbraiding thee; and when God and thine own Conſcience are thus againſt thee, thou canſt not but be extremely miſerable even in this life, beſides that fearful expectation of wrath which awaits thee in the next. Remember all this when thou art ſet upon by any temptation, and then ſure thou canſt not but look upon that temptation as a cheat that comes to rob thee of thy Peace, thy God, thy very Soul. And then ſure it will appear as unfit to entertain it, as thou wouldſt think it to harbour one in thy houſe, who thou knoweſt came to rob thee of what is deareſt to thee.

God's former pardons no incouragement to ſin.

33. And let not any experience of God's mercy in pardoning thee heretofore, encourage thee again to provoke him; for beſides that it is the higheſt degree of wickedneſs and unthankfulneſs to make that *goodneſs of his which ſhould lead thee to repentance* an encouragement in thy ſin: Beſides this, I ſay, the oftner thou haſt been pardoned, the leſs reaſon thou haſt to expect it again, becauſe thy ſin is ſo much the greater for having been committed againſt ſo much mercy. If a King have ſeveral times pardoned an offender, yet if he ſtill return to the commiſſion of the ſame fault, the King will at laſt be forced, if he have any love to Juſtice, to give him up to it. Now ſo it is here, God is as well Juſt as Merciful, and his Juſtice will at laſt ſurely and heavily avenge the abuſe of his Mercy; and there cannot be a greater abuſe of his Mercy than to ſin in hope of it: So that

it will prove a miſerable deceiving of thy ſelf thus to preſume upon it.

The Obligation of this vow perpetual.

34. Now this care of making good thy Vow muſt not abide with thee ſome few days only, and then be caſt aſide, but it muſt continue with thee all thy days. For if thou break thy Vow, it matters not whether ſooner or later. Nay perhaps the guilt may in ſome reſpects be more, if it be late, for if thou haſt for a good while gone on in the obſervance of it, that ſhews the thing is poſſible to thee; and ſo thy after-breaches are not of infirmity, becauſe thou canſt not avoid them, but of perverſeneſs, becauſe thou wilt not. Beſides the uſe of Chriſtian walking muſt needs make it more eaſie to thee. For indeed all the difficulty of it is but from the cuſtom of the contrary: And therefore if after ſome acquaintance with it, when thou haſt overcome ſomewhat of the hardneſs, thou ſhalt then give it over, it will be moſt inexcuſable. Therefore be careful all the days of thy life to keep ſuch a watch over thy ſelf, and ſo to avoid all occaſions of temptations, as may preſerve thee from all wilful breaches of this Vow.

Yet often to be renewed.

35. But though the obligation of every ſuch ſingle Vow reach to the utmoſt day of our lives, yet are we often to renew it, that is, we are often to receive the holy Sacrament, for that being the means of conveying to us ſo great and unvaluable benefits, and it being alſo a command of Chriſt, that we ſhould *do this in remembrance of him*, we are in reſpect both of reaſon and duty to omit no fit opportunity of partaking of that holy Table. I have now ſhewed you what that reverence is which we are to pay to God in this Sacrament.

SUNDAY IV.

Honour due to God's Name, Sins againſt it; Blaſphemy; Swearing; Of Aſſertory, Promiſſory, unlawful Oaths; of Perjury, vain Oaths, and the ſin of them, &c.

Honour due to God's Name.

Sect. 1. THE laſt thing wherein we are to expreſs our Reverence to him, is the Honouring of his Name. Now what this Honouring of his Name is, we ſhall beſt underſtand by conſidering what are the things by which it is diſhonoured, the avoiding of which will be our way of honouring it.

Sins againſt it.

Blaſphemy.

The firſt is, all Blaſphemies, or ſpeaking any evil thing of God the higheſt degree whereof is curſing him, or if we do not ſpeak it with our mouths, yet if we do it in our hearts by thinking any unworthy thing of him; it is lookt on by God, who ſees the heart, as the vileſt diſhonour. But there is alſo a blaſphemy of the Actions, that is, when men who profeſs to be the ſervants of God, live ſo wickedly that they bring up an evil report of him whom they own as their Maſter and Lord. This Blaſphemy the Apoſtle takes notice of, *Rom.* 2. 24. where he tells thoſe who profeſs to be obſervers of the Law, *That by their wicked actions, the Name of God was blaſphemed among the Gentiles.* Thoſe Gentiles were moved to think ill of God as the favourer of ſin, when they ſaw thoſe, who called themſelves his ſervants, commit it.

Swearing.

Aſſertory Oaths.

A ſecond way of Diſhonouring God's Name is by Swearing, and that is of two ſorts, either by falſe Oaths, or elſe by raſh and light ones. A falſe Oath may alſo be of two kinds, as firſt, That by which I affirm ſomewhat, or ſecondly, That by which I promiſe. The firſt is, when I ſay ſuch or ſuch a thing was done ſo, or ſo; and confirm this ſaying of mine with an Oath: if then I know there be not perfect truth in what I ſay, this is a flat perjury, a down-right being forſworn: Nay, if I ſwear to the truth of that whereof I am only doubtful, though the thing ſhould happen to be true, yet it brings upon me the guilt of Perjury; for I ſwear at a venture, and the thing might for ought I know be as well falſe as true; whereas I ought never to ſwear to any thing, the truth of which I do not certainly know.

Promiſſory. 2. But beſides this ſort of Oaths, by which I affirm any thing, there is the other ſort, that by which I promiſe ſomewhat. And that promiſe may be either to God or Man; when it is to God, we call it a Vow, of which I have already ſpoken, under the head of the Sacraments: I ſhall now only ſpeak of that to Man; and this may become a falſe Oath, either at, or after the time of taking it. At the time of taking it is falſe, if either I have then no real purpoſe of making it good, or elſe take it in a ſence different from that which I know he to whom I make the promiſe underſtands it; for the uſe of Oaths being to aſſure the perſons to whom they are made, they muſt be taken in their ſenſe. But if I were never ſo ſincere at the taking the Oath, if afterwards I do not perform it, I am certainly perjured.

Unlawful Oaths. 3. The nature of an Oath being then thus binding, it nearly concerns us to look that the matter of our Oaths be lawful, for elſe we run our ſelves into a woful ſnare. For Example, ſuppoſe I ſwear to kill a Man, if I perform my Oath, I am guilty of Murder; if I break it, of Perjury. And ſo I am under a neceſſity of ſinning one way or other: but there is nothing puts us under a greater degree of this unhappy neceſſity, than when we ſwear two Oaths, whereof the one is directly croſs and contradictory to the other. For if I ſwear to give a man my whole Eſtate, and afterwards ſwear to give all or part of that Eſtate to another, it is certain I muſt break my Oath to one of them, becauſe it is impoſſible to perform it to both, and ſo I muſt be under a neceſſity of being forſworn. And into this unhappy ſtrait every Man brings himſelf that takes any Oath which croſſes ſome other which he hath formerly taken; which ſhould make all, that love either God or their own Souls, reſolve never thus miſerably to entangle themſelves by taking one Oath croſs and thwarting to another. But it may perhaps here be asked, What a perſon that hath already brought himſelf into ſuch a condition, ſhall do; I anſwer, he muſt firſt heartily repent of the great ſin of taking the unlawful Oath, and then ſtick only to the lawful, which is all that is in his power towards the repairing his fault, and qualifying him for God's pardon for it.

God greatly diſhonoured by Perjury. 4. Having ſaid this concerning the kinds of this ſin of Perjury, I ſhall only add a few words to ſhew you how greatly God's Name is diſhonour'd by it. In all Oaths you know, God is ſolemnly called to witneſs the truth of that which is ſpoken; now if the thing be falſe, it is the baſeſt affront, and diſhonour that can poſſibly be done to God. For it is in reaſon to ſignifie one of theſe two things, either that we believe he knows not whether we ſay true or no; (and that is to make him no God, to ſuppoſe him to be as deceivable, and eaſie to be deluded as one of our ignorant neighbours) or elſe that he is willing to countenance our Lyes; the former robs him of that great Attribute of his, his knowing all things, and is ſurely a great diſhonouring of him, it being even amongſt men accounted one of the greateſt diſgraces, to account a Man fit to have cheats put upon him; yet even ſo we deal with God, if we venture to forſwear upon a hope that God diſcerns it not. But the other is yet worſe, for the ſuppoſing him willing to countenance our Lyes, is the making him a party in them; and is not only the making him no God (it being impoſſible that God ſhould either lye himſelf, or approve it in another) but it is the making him like the very Devil. For he it is that is a Lyar, and the Father of it, *John* 8. 44. And ſurely I need not ſay more to prove that this is the higheſt degree of diſhonouring God's Name.

The puniſhments of it.

5. But if any yet doubt the hainouſneſs of this Sin, let him but conſider what God himſelf ſays of it in the third Commandment, where he ſolemnly profeſſes, *He will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his Name in vain*; And ſure the adding that to this Commandment, and none of the reſt, is the marking this out for a moſt hainous guilt. And if you look into *Zach.*5. you will there find the puniſhment is anſwerable, even to the utter deſtruction, not only of the man, but his houſe alſo. Therefore it concerns all men, as they love either their temporal or eternal welfare, to keep them moſt ſtrictly from this ſin.

Vain Oaths.

But beſides this of forſwearing, I told you there was another ſort of Oaths by which God's Name is diſhonoured; thoſe are the vain and light Oaths, ſuch as are ſo uſual in our common diſcourſe, and are expreſly forbidden by Chriſt, *Matth.* 5. 34. *But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the Earth, for it is his footſtool:* Where you ſee we are not allowed to ſwear even by meer Creatures, becauſe of the relation they have to God. How great a wickedneſs is it then to profane his holy Name by raſh and vain Oaths? This is a ſin that is (by I know not what charm of Satan's) grown into a faſhion among us; and now it's being ſo, draws daily more men into it. But it is to be remembred that when we ſhall appear before God's Judgment-ſeat to anſwer for thoſe profanations of his Name, it will be no excuſe to ſay, It was the faſhion to do ſo: it will rather be an increaſe of our guilt, that we have by our own practice helped to confirm that wicked cuſtom, which we ought to have beat down and diſcountenanced.

The ſin of them.

6. And ſure whatever this prophane Age thinks of it, this is a ſin of a very high nature. For beſides that it is a direct breach of the Precept of Chriſt; it ſhews firſt, a very mean and low eſteem of God: every Oath we ſwear is the appealing to God to judge the truth of what we ſpeak, and therefore being of ſuch greatneſs and Majeſty, requires that the matter concerning which we thus appeal to him ſhould be of great weight and moment, ſomewhat wherein either his own glory, or ſome conſiderable good of Man is concern'd. But when we ſwear in common diſcourſe, it is far otherwiſe; and the triflingeſt or lighteſt thing ſerves for the matter of an Oath; nay, often men ſwear to ſuch vain and fooliſh things, as a conſidering perſon would be aſhamed barely to ſpeak. And is it not a great deſpiſing of God to call him ſolemnly to judge in ſuch childiſh, ſuch wretched matters? God is the great King of the world; now though a King be to be reſorted unto in weighty caſes, yet ſure he would think himſelf much deſpiſed, if he ſhould be called to judge between Boys at their childiſh Games; and God knows many things whereto we frequently ſwear, are not of greater weight, and therefore are a ſign that we do not rightly eſteem of God.

They lead to perjury.

7. Secondly, This common ſwearing is a ſin which leads directly to the former of forſwearing; for he that by the uſe of ſwearing hath made Oaths ſo familiar to him, will be likely to take the dreadfulleſt Oath without much conſideration. For how ſhall he that ſwears hourly, look upon an Oath with any reverence? And he that doth not, it is his chance, not his care that is to be thanked, if he keep from Perjury. Nay, further; he that ſwears commonly, is not only prepared to forſwear when a ſolemn

Oath is tendred him, but in all probability does actually forſwear himſelf often in theſe ſuddener Oaths : For ſuppoſing them to come from a man ere he is aware (which is the beſt can be ſaid of them) what aſſurance can any man have who ſwears ere he is aware, that he ſhall not lye ſo too ; And if he doth both together, he muſt neceſſarily be forſworn. But he that obſerves your common ſwearers will be put paſt doubt that they are often forſworn. For they uſually ſwear indifferently to things true or falſe, doubtful or certain. And I doubt not but if men who are guilty of this ſin would but impartially examine their own practice, their hearts would ſecond me in this obſervation.

No temptation to them.

8. Thirdly, This is a ſin to which there is no temptation, there is nothing either of pleaſure of profit got by it: Moſt other ſins offer us ſomewhat either of the one or the other, but this is utterly empty of both. So that in this ſin the Devil does not play the Merchant for our Souls, as in others he does ; he doth not ſo much as cheapen them, but we give them freely into his hands without any thing in exchange. There ſeems to be but one thing poſſible for men to hope to gain by it, and that is to be believed in what they ſay, when they thus bind it by an Oath. But this alſo they conſtantly fail of ; for there are none ſo little believed as the common ſwearers. And good reaſon, for he that makes no Conſcience thus to profane God's Name, why ſhall any man believe he makes any of lying? Nay their forwardneſs to confirm every the ſlighteſt thing by an Oath, rather gives jealouſie that they have ſome inward guilt of falſeneſs, for which that Oath muſt be the Cloak. And thus you ſee in how little ſtead it ſtands them, even to this only purpoſe for which they can pretend it uſeful: And to any other advantage it makes not the leaſt claim, and therefore is a ſin without temptation, and conſequently without excuſe ; for it ſhews the greateſt contempt, nay, unkindneſs to God, when we will provoke him thus, without any thing to tempt us to it. And therefore though the commonneſs of this ſin hath made it paſs but for a ſmall one, yet it is very far from being ſo either in it ſelf, or in God's account.

Neceſſity of abſtaining from them.

9. Let all therefore who are not yet fallen into the cuſtom of this ſin, be moſt careful never to yield to the leaſt beginnings of it, and for thoſe who are ſo miſerable, as to be already enſnared in it, let them immediately as they tender their Souls, get out of it. And let no man plead the hardneſs of leaving an old cuſtom, as an excuſe for his continuing in it, but rather the longer he hath been in it, ſo much the more haſte let him make out of it, as thinking it too too much, that he hath ſo long gone on in ſo great a ſin. And if the length of the cuſtom have increaſed the difficulty of leaving it, that is in all reaſon to make him ſet immediately to the caſting it off, leſt that difficulty at laſt grow to an impoſſibility ; and the harder he finds it at the preſent, ſo much the more diligent and watchful he muſt be in the uſe of all thoſe means which may tend to the overcoming that ſinful habit: ſome few of thoſe means it will not be amiſs here to mention.

Means for it.

Senſe of the guilt and danger.

10. Firſt, Let him poſſeſs his mind fully of the hainouſneſs of the ſin, and not to meaſure it only according to the common rate of the world. And when he is fully perſwadad of the guilt, then let him add to that, the conſideration of the danger, as that it puts him out of God's favour at the preſent, and will, if he continue in it, caſt him into Hell for ever. And ſure if this were but throughly laid to heart, it would reſtrain this ſin. For I would ask a man that pretends impoſſibility of leaving the cuſtom, whether if he were ſure he ſhould be hanged the next Oath he ſwore, the fear

of it would not keep him from ſwearing? I can ſcarce believe any Man in his Wits ſo little Maſter of himſelf, but it would. And then ſurely damning is ſo much worſe than hanging, that in all reaſon the fear of that ought to be a much greater reſtraint. The doubt is, Men do either not heartily believe that this ſin will damn them, or if they do, they look on it as a thing a great way off, and ſo are not much moved with it; but both theſe are very unreaſonable. For the firſt, it is certain, that every one that continues wilfully in any ſin is ſo long in a ſtate of damnation, and therefore this being ſo continued in, muſt certainly put a Man in that condition. For the ſecond, it is very poſſible, he may be deceived in thinking it ſo far off, for how knows any Man that he ſhall not be ſtruck dead with an Oath in his mouth? Or, if he were ſure not to be ſo, yet Eternal Damnation is ſurely to be dreaded above all things, be it at what diſtance ſoever.

Truth in ſpeaking.

11. A ſecond means is to be exactly true in all thou ſpeakeſt; that all men may believe thee on thy bare word, and then thou wilt never have occaſion to confirm it by an Oath, to make it more credible, which is the only colour or reaſon can at any time be pretended for ſwearing.

Forſaking the occaſion.

12. Thirdly, Obſerve what it is that moſt betrays thee to this ſin, whether drink, or anger, or the company and example of others, or whatever elſe, and then if ever thou mean to forſake the ſin, forſake thoſe occaſions of it.

Reverence of God.

13. Fourthly, Endeavour to poſſeſs thy heart with a continual Reverence of God, and if that once grow into a cuſtom with thee, it will quickly turn out that contrary one of profaning. Uſe and accuſtom thy ſelf therefore to this reverence of God, and particularly to ſuch a reſpect to his Name, as if it be poſſible, never to mention it without ſome lifting up of thy heart to him. Even in thy ordinary diſcourſe, when ever thou takeſt his Name into thy mouth, let it be an occaſion of raiſing up thy thoughts to him. But by no means permit thy ſelf to uſe it in idle by-words, or the like. If thou doſt accuſtom thy ſelf to pay this reverence to the bare mention of his Name, it will be an excellent fence againſt the profaning it in Oaths.

Watchfulneſs.

14. A fifth means is a diligent and conſtant watch over thy ſelf, that thou thus *offend not with thy tongue*, without which all the former will come to nothing. And the laſt means is Prayer, which muſt be added to all thy endeavours; therefore pray earneſtly, that God will enable thee to overcome this wicked cuſtom; ſay with the *Pſalmiſt, ſet a watch, O Lord, over my mouth, and keep the door of my lips*; and if thou doſt ſincerely ſet thy ſelf to the uſe of means for it, thou mayeſt be aſſured, God will not be wanting in his aſſiſtance. I have been the longer on this, becauſe it is ſo reigning a ſin. God in his mercy give all that are guilty of it a true ſight of the hainouſneſs of it.

Prayer.

What it is to honour God's Name.

15. By theſe ſeveral ways of diſhonouring God's Name you may underſtand what is the duty of honouring it, *viz.* A ſtrict abſtaining from every one of theſe, and that abſtinence founded on an awful reſpect and reverence to that ſacred Name which is Great, Wonderful and Holy, *Pſalm* 99. 3. I have now paſt through the ſeveral branches of that great Duty of Honouring of God.

SUNDAY V.

Of worſhip due to God's Name. Of Prayer and its ſeveral parts. Of Publick Prayers in the Church, in the Family. Of Private Prayer. Of Repentance,&c. *Of Faſting.*

Worſhip. *Sect.* 1. THE Eighth Duty we owe to God is WORSHIP; This is that Great Duty by which eſpecially we acknowledge his Godhead, Worſhip being proper only to God, and therefore it is to be lookt on as a moſt weighty duty. *Prayer, its parts.* This is to be performed, firſt, by our Souls, ſecondly, by our Bodies: the Soul's part is Praying. Now Prayer is a ſpeaking to God, and there are divers parts of it, according to the different things about which we ſpeak.

Confeſſion. 2. As firſt, There is Confeſſion, that is, the acknowledging our ſins to God. And this may be either general or particular; the general, is when we only confeſs in groſs, that we are ſinful; the particular, when we mention the ſeveral ſorts and acts of our ſins. The former is neceſſary to be always a part of our ſolemn Prayers, whether publick or private. The latter is proper for private Prayer, and there the oftner it is uſed the better; yea, even in our daily private Prayer it will be fit conſtantly to remember ſome of our greateſt and fouleſt ſins, though never ſo long ſince paſt. For ſuch we ſhould never think ſufficiently confeſt and bewailed. And this bewailing muſt always go along with Confeſſion; we muſt be heartily ſorry for the ſins we confeſs, and from our ſouls acknowledge our own great unworthineſs in having committed them. For our Confeſſion is not intended to inſtruct God, who knows our ſins much better than our ſelves do, but it is to humble our ſelves, and therefore we muſt not think to have confeſt aright till that be done.

Petition. 3. The ſecond part of Prayer is Petition, that is, The begging of God whatſoever we want either for our Souls or Bodies. *For our Souls.* For our Souls we muſt firſt beg pardon of ſins, and that for the ſake of *Jeſus* Chriſt, who ſhed his blood to obtain it. Then we muſt alſo beg the Grace and aſſiſtance of God's Spirit to enable us to forſake our ſins, and to walk in obedience to him. And herein it will be needful particularly to beg all the ſeveral Vertues, as Faith, Love, Zeal, Purity, Repentance, and the like, but eſpecially thoſe which thou moſt wanteſt; and therefore obſerve what thy wants are, and if thou beeſt proud, be moſt inſtant in praying for Humility; if luſtful, for Chaſtity, and ſo for all other Graces, according as thou findeſt thy needs. And in all theſe things that concern thy Soul, be very earneſt and importunate; take no denial from God, nor give over, though thou do not preſently obtain what thou ſueſt for. But if thou haſt never ſo long prayed for a Grace, and yet findeſt it not, do not grow weary of praying, but rather ſearch what the cauſe may be which makes thy Prayers ſo ineffectual; ſee if thou do not thy ſelf hinder them: perhaps thou prayeſt to God to enable thee to conquer ſome ſin, and yet never goeſt about to fight againſt it, never makeſt any reſiſtance, but yieldeſt to it as often as it comes, nay, putteſt thy ſelf in its way, in the road of all temptations. If it be thus, no wonder though thy Prayers avail not, for thou wilt not let them. Therefore amend this, and ſet to the doing of thy part ſincerely, and then thou needeſt not fear but God will do his.

Bodies. 4. Secondly, We are to petition alſo for our Bodies; that is, we are to ask of God ſuch neceſſaries of Life as are needful for us, while we live here. But theſe only in ſuch a degree and meaſure, as his Wiſdom ſees beſt for us: We muſt not preſume to be our own carvers, and pray for all that wealth, or greatneſs, which our own vain hearts may perhaps deſire, but only for ſuch a condition, in reſpect of outward things, as he ſees may moſt tend to thoſe great ends of our living here, the glorifying him, and the ſaving of our own Souls.

Deprecation.

Of Sin.

5. A third part of Prayer is Deprecation, that is, when we pray to God to turn away ſome evil from us. Now this evil may be either the evil of Sin, or the evil of Puniſhment. The evil of Sin is that we are eſpecially to pray againſt, moſt earneſtly begging of God, that he will by the power of his Grace, preſerve us from falling into ſin. And whatever ſins they are, to which thou knoweſt thy ſelf moſt inclined, there be particularly earneſt with God to preſerve thee from them. This is to be done daily, but then more eſpecially, when we are under any preſent temptation, and in danger of falling into any ſin: in which caſe we have reaſon to cry out as S. *Peter* did when he found himſelf ſinking, *Save, Lord, or I periſh*; humbly beſeeching him either to withdraw the temptation, or ſtrengthen us to withſtand it, neither of which we can do for our ſelves.

Of puniſhment.

6. Secondly, We are likewiſe to pray againſt the evil of Puniſhment, but principally againſt Spiritual Puniſhments, as the Anger of God, the withdrawing of his Grace, and Eternal Damnation. Againſt theſe we can never pray with too much earneſtneſs. But we may alſo pray againſt Temporal Puniſhments, that is, any outward affliction, but this with ſubmiſſion to God's Will, according to the example of Chriſt, *Matth.* 26. 39. *Not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

Interceſſion.

7. A fourth part of Prayer is Interceſſion, that is, Praying for others. This in general we are to do for all Mankind, as well ſtrangers as acquaintance, but more particularly, thoſe to whom we have any eſpecial Relation, either publick, as our Governours both in Church and State, or private, as Parents, Husband, Wife, Children, Friends, *&c.* We are alſo to pray for all that are in affliction, and ſuch particular perſons as we diſcern eſpecially to be ſo: Yea, We are to pray for thoſe that have done us injury, thoſe *that deſpitefully uſe and perſecute us*, for it is expreſly the command of Chriſt, *Matth.* 5. 44. and that whereof he hath likewiſe given us the higheſt example, in praying even for his very crucifiers, *Luk.* 23. 34. *Father, forgive them*,. For all theſe ſorts of perſons we are to pray, and that for the very ſame good things we beg of God for our ſelves, that God would give them in their ſeveral places and callings all ſpiritual and temporal bleſſings which he ſees wanting to them, and turn away from them all evil, whether of Sin or Puniſhment.

Thankſgiving.

8. The fifth part of Prayer is Thankſgiving; that is, the praiſing and bleſſing God for all his Mercies, whether to our own perſons, and thoſe that immediately relate to us, or to the Church and Nation whereof we are members, or yet more general to all Mankind; and this for all his Mercies both Spiritual and Temporal. In the Spiritual, firſt, for thoſe wherein we are all in common concerned, as the giving of his Son, the ſending of his Spirit, and all thoſe means he hath uſed to bring ſinful men unto himſelf. Then ſecondly, For thoſe Mercies we have in our own particulars received, ſuch are the having been born within the pale of the Church, and ſo brought up in the Chriſtian Religion, by which we have been partakers of thoſe precious advantages of the Word and Sacraments, and ſo have had, without any care or pains of ours, the means of Eternal Life put into our hands. But beſides theſe, there is none of us but have received other ſpiritual Mercies from God.

Spiritual Mercies.

9. As firſt, God's Patience and long-ſuffering, waiting for our Repen-

tance, and not cutting us off in our Sins. Secondly, His calls and invitations of us to that repentance, not only outward, in the miniſtry of the Word, but alſo inward, by the motions of his Spirit. But then if thou be one that haſt by the help of God's Grace been wrought upon by theſe calls, and brought from a profane or worldly, to a Chriſtian courſe of life, thou art ſurely in the higheſt degree tied to magnifie and praiſe his goodneſs, as having received from him the greateſt of mercies.

Temporal.

10. We are likewiſe to give thanks for Temporal Bleſſings, whether ſuch as concern the publick, as the proſperity of the Church or Nation, and all remarkable deliverances afforded to either; or elſe ſuch as concern our particular; ſuch are all the good things of this life which we enjoy; as Health, Friends, Food, Raiment, and the like; alſo for thoſe minutely preſervations, whereby we are by God's Gracious Providence kept from danger, and the eſpecial deliverances which God hath given us in the time of greateſt perils. It will be impoſſible to ſet down the ſeveral mercies which every Man receives from God, becauſe they differ in kind and degree between one Man and another. But it is ſure that he which receives leaſt, hath yet enough to employ his whole life in praiſes to God. And it will be very fit for every Man to conſider the ſeveral paſſages of his life, and the mercies he hath in each received, and ſo to gather a kind of Liſt, or Catalogue of them, at leaſt the principal of them, which he may always have in his memory, and often with a thankful heart repeat before God.

Publick Prayers in the Church.

11. Theſe are the ſeveral parts of Prayer, and all of them to be uſed both publickly and privately. The publick uſe of them is firſt, that in the Church, where all meet to joyn in thoſe Prayers wherein they are in common concerned. And in this (where the Prayers are ſuch as they ought to be) we ſhould be very conſtant, there being an eſpecial bleſſing promiſed to the joynt requeſts of the faithful; and he that without a neceſſary cauſe abſents himſelf from ſuch Publick Prayers, cuts himſelf off from the Church, which hath always been thought ſo unhappy a thing, that it is the greateſt puniſhment the Governours of the Church can lay upon the worſt offender; and therefore it is a ſtrange madneſs for men to inflict it upon themſelves.

In the Family.

12. A ſecond ſort of Publick Prayer is that in a family, where all that are members of it joyn in their common ſupplications; and this alſo ought to be very carefully attended to, firſt, by the Maſter of the Family, who is to look that there be ſuch Prayers, it being as much his part thus to provide for the Souls of his Children and Servants, as to provide food for their Bodies. Therefore there is none even the meaneſt houſholder, but ought to take this care. If either himſelf or any of his Family can read, he may uſe ſome Prayers out of ſome good Book; if it be the Service-Book of the Church he makes a good choice: if they cannot read, it will then be neceſſary they ſhould be taught without Book ſome form of Prayer which they may uſe in the Family, for which purpoſe again ſome of the Prayers of the Church will be very fit, as being moſt eaſie for their memories by reaſon of their ſhortneſs, and yet containing a great deal of matter. But what choice ſoever they make of Prayers, let them be ſure to have ſome, and let no Man that profeſſes himſelf a Chriſtian, keep ſo heatheniſh a family, as not to ſee God be daily worſhipped in it. But when the Maſter of a Family hath done his duty in this providing, it is the duty of every member of it to make uſe of that proviſion, by being conſtant and diligent at thoſe Family-Prayers.

13. Private

Private Prayer.

13. Private or ſecret Prayer is that which is uſed by a man alone apart from all others, wherein we are to be more particular according to our particular needs, than in publick it is fit to be. And this of Private Prayer is a duty which will not be excuſed by the performance of the other of Publick. They are both required, and one muſt not be taken in exchange for the other. And whoever is diligent in publick Prayers, and yet negligent in private, it is much to be feared he rather ſeeks to approve himſelf to Men than to God, contrary to the command of our Saviour, *Matth.* 6. who enjoyns this private Prayer, this *praying to our Father in ſecret,* from whom alone we are to expect our reward, and not from the vain praiſes of Men.

Frequency in Prayer.

14. Now this duty of Prayer is to be often performed, by none ſeldomer than Evening and Morning, it being moſt neceſſary that we ſhould thus begin and end all our works with God, and that not only in reſpect of the duty we owe him, but alſo in reſpect of our ſelves who can never be either proſperous or ſafe, but by committing our ſelves to him; and therefore ſhould tremble to venture on the perils either of day or night without his ſafeguard. How much oftner this duty is to be performed, muſt be judged according to the buſineſs or leiſure men have: Where, by buſineſs, I mean not ſuch buſineſs as men unprofitably make to themſelves, but the neceſſary buſineſs of a Man's Calling, which with ſome will not afford them much time for ſet and ſolemn Prayer. But even theſe men may often in a day lift up their hearts to God in ſome ſhort Prayers even whilſt they are at their work. As for thoſe that have more leiſure, they are in all reaſon to beſtow more time upon this duty. And let no Man that can find time to beſtow upon his Vanities, nay, perhaps his ſins, ſay he wants leiſure for Prayer, but let him now endeavour to redeem what he hath miſ-ſpent, by imploying more of that leiſure in this duty for the future: And ſurely if we did but rightly weigh how much it is our own advantage to perform this duty, we ſhould think it wiſdom to be as frequent as we are ordinarily ſeldom in it.

The advantages of Prayer.

Honour.

15. For firſt, it is a great Honour for us poor worms of the Earth to be allowed to ſpeak ſo freely to the Majeſty of Heaven. If a King ſhould but vouchſafe to let one of his meaneſt Subjects talk familiarly and freely with him, it would be lookt on as a huge honour; that Man how deſpicable ſoever he were before, would then be the envy of all his Neighbours; and there is little queſtion he would be willing to take all opportunities of receiving ſo great a Grace. But alas! this is nothing to the honour is offered us, who are allowed, nay invited to ſpeak to, and converſe with the King of Kings, and therefore how forward ſhould we in all reaſon be to it?

Benefit.

16. Secondly, It is a great Benefit, even the greateſt that can be imagined; for Prayer is the inſtrument of fetching down all good things to us, whether Spiritual or Temporal; no Prayer, that is qualified as it ought to be, but is ſure to bring down a bleſſing according to that of the Wiſe Man, *Ecclus.* 35. 17. *The prayer of the humble pierceth the clouds, and will not turn away till the higheſt regard it.* You would think him a happy Man that had one certain means of helping him to whatever he wanted, though it were to coſt him much pains and labour; now this happy Man thou mayeſt be if thou wilt. Prayer is the never-failing means of bringing thee, if not all that thou thinkeſt thou wanteſt, yet all that indeed thou doeſt, that is, all that God ſees fit for thee. And therefore be there never ſo much wearineſs to thy fleſh in the duty, yet conſidering in what continual want

thou ſtandeſt of ſomething or other from God, it is a madneſs to let that uneaſineſs diſhearten thee, and keep thee from this ſo ſure means of ſupplying thy wants.

ant-
eſs.

17. But in the third place, this duty is in it ſelf ſo far from being uneaſie, that it is very pleaſant. God is the fountain of happineſs, *and at his right hand are pleaſures for evermore, Pſal. 16. 11.* And therefore the nearer we draw to him, the happier we muſt needs be, the very joys of Heaven ariſing from our nearneſs to God. Now in this Life we have no way of drawing ſo near to him as by this of Prayer, and therefore ſurely it is that which in it ſelf is apt to afford abundance of delight and pleaſure; If it ſeem otherwiſe to us, it is from ſome diſtemper of our own hearts, which like a ſick palate cannot reliſh the moſt pleaſant meat. Prayer is a pleaſant Duty, but it is withal a Spiritual one; and therefore if thy heart be carnal; if that be ſet either on the contrary pleaſures of the fleſh, or droſs of the World: No marvel then, if thou taſte no pleaſantneſs in it, if like the *Iſraelites*, thou deſpiſe Manna whilſt thou longeſt after the fleſh pots of *Egypt*. Therefore if thou find a wearineſs in this Duty, ſuſpect thy ſelf, purge and refine thy heart from the love of all ſin, and endeavour to put it into a heavenly and ſpiritual frame, and then thou wilt find this no unpleaſant exerciſe, but full of delight and ſatisfaction. In the mean time complain not of the hardneſs of the Duty, but of the untowardneſs of thy own heart.

Carnality one reaſon of its ſeeming otherwiſe.

Want of uſe another.

18. But there may alſo be another reaſon of its ſeeming unpleaſant to us, and that is want of uſe. You know there are many things, which ſeem uneaſie at the firſt trial, which yet after we are accuſtomed to them ſeem very delightful, and if this be thy caſe, then thou knoweſt a ready cure, *viz.* To uſe it oftner, and ſo this conſideration naturally enforces the exhortation of being frequent in this duty.

To ask nothing unlawful.

To ask in Faith.

In Humility.

With Attention.

19. But we are not only to conſider how often, but how well we perform it. Now to do it well, we are to reſpect, firſt, The Matter of our Prayers, to look that we ask nothing that is unlawful, as Revenge upon our Enemies, or the like; Secondly, The Manner; and that muſt be firſt in Faith; we muſt believe, that if we ask as we ought, God will either give us the thing we ask for, or elſe ſomething which he ſees better for us. And then ſecondly, in Humility, We muſt acknowledge our ſelves utterly unworthy of any of thoſe good things we beg for, and therefore ſue for them only for Chriſt's ſake; Thirdly, with Attention, We muſt mind what we are about, and not ſuffer our ſelves to be carried away to the thought of other things. I told you at the firſt, that Prayer was the buſineſs of the Soul, but if our minds be wandring, it is the work only of the Tongue and lips, which makes it in God's account no better than vain babling, and ſo will never bring a bleſſing on us. Nay, as *Jacob* ſaid to his mother, *Gen.* 27. 12. It will be more likely to bring a curſe on us than a bleſſing, for it is a profaning one of the moſt ſolemn parts of God's Service, it is a piece of Hypocriſie, the *drawing near to him with our lips, when our hearts are far from him*, and a great ſlighting and deſpiſing that dreadful Majeſty we come before: And as to our ſelves it is a moſt ridiculous folly, that we who come to God upon ſuch weighty errands, as are all the concernments of our Souls and Bodies, ſhould in the midſt forget our buſineſs, and purſue every the lighteſt thing that either our own vain fancies or the Devil, whoſe buſineſs it is here to hinder us, can offer to us. It is juſt as if a Malefactor, that comes to ſue for his Life to the King, ſhould in the midſt of his ſupplication happen to eſpy a Butter-fly, and then ſhould leave his ſuit,

and run a chaſe after that Butter-fly: Would you not think it pity, a Pardon ſhould be caſt away upon ſo wretchleſs a creature? and ſure it will be as unreaſonable to expect that God ſhould attend and grant thoſe ſuits of ours, which we do not at all conſider our ſelves.

Helps againſt wandring.

Conſideration of God's Majeſty.

Our needs.

Prayers for God's aid.

20. This wandring in Prayer is a thing we are much concern'd to arm our ſelves againſt, it being that to which we are naturally wonderful prone. To that end it will be neceſſary firſt to poſſeſs our hearts at our coming to Prayers with the greatneſs of that Majeſty we are to approach, that ſo we may dread to be vain and trifling in his preſence. Secondly, We are to conſider the great concernment of the things we are to ask, ſome whereof are ſuch that if we ſhould not be heard, we were of all creatures the moſt miſerable, and yet this wandring is the way to keep us from being heard. Thirdly, We are to beg God's aid in this particular: And therefore when thou ſetteſt to Prayer, let thy firſt Petition be for this Grace of Attention.

Watchfulneſs.

21. Laſtly, Be as watchful as is poſſible over thy heart in time of Prayer to keep out all wandring thoughts, or, if any have gotten in, let them not find entertainment, but as ſoon as ever thou diſcerneſt them, ſuffer them not to abide one moment, but caſt them out with indignation, and beg God's pardon for them. And if thou doſt thus ſincerely and diligently ſtrive againſt them, either God will enable thee in ſome meaſure to overcome them, or he will in his Mercy pardon thee what thou canſt not prevent: But if it be through thy own negligence, thou art to expect neither, ſo long as that negligence continues.

With Zeal.

22. In the fourth place, We muſt look our Prayers be with zeal and earneſtneſs; it is not enough that we ſo far attend them as barely to know what it is we ſay; but we muſt put forth all the affection and devotion of our Souls, and that according to the ſeveral parts of Prayer before mentioned. It is not the cold, faint requeſt that will ever obtain from God; we ſee it will not from our ſelves; for if a beggar ſhould ask relief from us, and do it in ſuch a ſcornful manner that he ſeemed indifferent whether he had it or no, we ſhould think he had either little want, or great pride; and ſo have no heart to give him. Now ſurely the things we ask from God are ſo much above the rate of an ordinary Alms, that we can never expect they ſhould be given to ſlight and heartleſs Petitions. No more in like manner will our Sacrifice of Praiſe and Thankſgiving ever be accepted by him, if it be not offered from a heart truly affected with the ſenſe of his Mercies; it's but a kind of formal complementing, which will never be approved by him who requires the heart, and not the lips only. And the like may be ſaid of all the other parts of Prayer. Therefore be careful when thou draweſt nigh to God in Prayer, to raiſe up thy Soul to the higheſt pitch of zeal and earneſtneſs thou art able. And becauſe of thy ſelf alone thou art not able to do any thing, beſeech God that he will inflame thy heart with this heavenly fire of Devotion, and when thou haſt obtained it, beware that thou neither quench it by any wilful ſin, nor let it go out again for want of ſtirring it up and imploying it.

With Purity.

22. Fifthly, We muſt Pray with Purity, I mean, we muſt purge our hearts from all affections to ſin. This is ſurely the meaning of the Apoſtle, *1 Tim.* 2.8. when he commands men to *lift up holy hands in Prayer*, and he there inſtances in one ſpecial ſort of ſin, wrath and doubting, where by doubting is meant thoſe unkind diſputes and contentions, which are ſo common amongſt men. And ſurely he that cheriſhes that or any other ſin in his heart, can never lift up thoſe holy hands which are required in this du-

ty. And then ſure his Prayers be they never ſo many or earneſt, will little avail him. The Pſalmiſt will tell him, he ſhall not be heard, *Pſalm* 66.18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* Nay, *Solomon* will tell him yet worſe, that his Prayers are not only vain, but abominable, *Prov.* 15. 8. *The ſacriſice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.* And thus to have our Prayers turned into ſin, is one of the heavieſt things that can befal any Man. We ſee it is ſet down in that ſad Catalogue of curſes, *Pſalm* 109. 7. Therefore let us not be ſo cruel to our ſelves as to pull it upon our own heads, which we certainly do if we offer up Prayers from an impure heart.

To right ends.

24. In the laſt place, We muſt direct our Prayers to right ends; and that either in reſpect of the Prayer it ſelf, or the things we pray for; Firſt, We muſt Pray, not to gain the praiſe of devotion amongſt men, like thoſe hypocrites, *Matth.* 6. 5. nor yet only for company or faſhion-ſake, to do as others do: But we muſt do it, firſt, as an act of worſhip to God; ſecondly, as an acknowledgment, that he is that great ſpring from whence alone we expect all good things; and thirdly, to gain a ſupply of our own or others needs. Then in reſpect of the Things prayed for; we muſt be ſure to have no ill aims upon them; we muſt not ask that we *may conſume it upon our luſts*, *Jam.* 4. 3. as thoſe do who pray for Wealth, that they may live in riot and exceſs, and for power that they may be able to miſchief their enemies and the like. But our end in all muſt be God's Glory firſt, and next that, our own and others Salvation; and all other things muſt be taken in only as they tend to thoſe, which they can never do if we abuſe them to ſin. I have now done with that firſt part of Worſhip, that of the Soul.

Bodily worſhip.

25. The other is that of the Body, and that is nothing elſe but ſuch humble and reverent geſtures in our approaches to God, as may both expreſs the inward reverence of our Souls, and may alſo pay him ſome tribute from our very Bodies, with which the Apoſtle commands us to glorifie God, as well as with our Souls; and good reaſon, ſince he hath created and redeemed the one as well as the other: Whenſoever therefore thou offereſt thy Prayers unto God, let it be with all lowlineſs as well of Body as of Mind, according to that of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſalm* 95.6. *O come let us worſhip, let us fall down and kneel before the Lord our maker.*

Repentance.

26. The ninth DUTY to God is REPENTANCE: That this is a Duty to God we are taught by the Apoſtle, *Acts* 20.21. where ſpeaking of Repentance, he ſtiles it repentance towards God. And there is good reaſon this ſhould be a Duty to him, ſince there is no ſin we commit but is either mediately or immediately againſt him. For though there be ſins both againſt our Selves and our Neighbours, yet they being forbidden by God, they are alſo breaches of his Commandments, and ſo ſins againſt him.

A turning from ſin to God.

This Repentance is, in ſhort, nothing but a turning from ſin to God, the caſting off all our former evils, and inſtead thereof conſtantly practiſing all thoſe Chriſtian Duties which God requireth of us. And this is ſo neceſſary a duty, that without it we certainly periſh; we have Chriſt's word for it, *Luke* 13. 5. *Except ye repent ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.*

Times for this Duty.

27. The Directions for performing the ſeveral parts of this Duty have been already given in the preparation to the Lord's Super. And thither I refer the Reader. Only I ſhall here mind him, that it is not to be lookt upon as a Duty to be practiſed only at the time of receiving the Sacrament. For this being the only remedy againſt the poiſon of ſin, we muſt renew

Daily.

renew it as often as we repeat our ſins, that is, daily. I mean we muſt every day repent of the ſins of that day. For what Chriſt ſaith of other evils, is true alſo of this, ***Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof***; we have ſins enough of each day to exerciſe a daily Repentance, and therefore every Man muſt thus daily call himſelf to account.

At ſet times.

28. But as it is in accounts, they who conſtantly ſet down their daily expences, have yet ſome ſet time of caſting up the whole ſum, as at the end of the week or month; ſo ſhould it alſo be here, we ſhould ſet aſide ſome time to humble our ſelves ſolemnly before God for the ſins, not of that day only, but of our whole lives. And the frequenter theſe times are, the better. For the oftner we thus caſt up our accounts with God, and ſee what vaſt debts we are run in to him, the more humbly ſhall we think of our ſelves, and the more ſhall thirſt after his mercy, which two are the ſpecial things that muſt qualifie us for his pardon. He therefore that can aſſign himſelf one day in the Week for this purpoſe, will take a thriving courſe for his Soul. Or if any Man's ſtate of Life be ſo buſie as not to afford him to do it ſo often, let him yet come as near to that frequency as is poſſible for him, remembering always, that none of his worldly imployments can bring him in near ſo gainful a return as this ſpiritual one will do, and therefore it is very ill husbandry to purſue them to the neglect of this.

In the time of affliction.

29. Beſides theſe conſtant times, there are likewiſe occaſional times for the performance of this duty; ſuch eſpecially are the times of Calamity and Affliction; for when any ſuch befals us, we are to look on it as a meſſage ſent from Heaven to call us to this Duty, and therefore muſt never neglect it when we are thus ſummoned to it, leſt we be of the number of them who *deſpiſe the chaſtiſements of the Lord*, *Heb.* 12. 5.

At Death.

30. There is yet another time of Repentance, which in the practice of men hath gotten away the cuſtom from all thoſe, and that is the time of death, which it is true, is a time very fit to renew our repentance, but ſure not proper to begin it; and it is a moſt deſperate madneſs for men to defer it till then. For to ſay the mildeſt of it, it is the venturing our Souls upon ſuch miſerable uncertainties as no wiſe man would truſt with any thing of the leaſt value.

The danger of deferring it till then.

For firſt, I would ask any Man that means to Repent at his death, how he knows he ſhall have an hours time for it? Do we not daily ſee men ſnatcht away in a moment? And who can tell that it ſhall not be his own caſe? But ſecondly, Suppoſe he have a more leiſurely death, that ſome diſeaſe give him warning of its approach, yet perhaps he will not underſtand that warning, but will ſtill flatter himſelf, as very often ſick people do, with hopes of life to the laſt: and ſo his death may be ſudden to him, though it comes by never ſo ſlow degrees. But again thirdly, If he do diſcern his danger, yet how is he ſure he ſhall then be able to repent? Repentance is a Grace of God, not at our command; and it is juſt and uſual with God, when Men have a long time refuſed and rejected that Grace, reſiſted all his calls and invitations to converſion and amendment, to give them over at laſt to the hardneſs of their own hearts, and not to afford them any more of that Grace they have ſo deſpiſed. Yet ſuppoſe in the fourth place, that God in his infinite patience ſhould ſtill continue the offer of that Grace to thee, yet thou that haſt reſiſted, it may be thirty, or forty, or fifty years together, how knoweſt thou that thou ſhalt put off that habit of reſiſtance upon a ſudden, and make uſe of the Grace afforded? It is ſure thou haſt many

The diſadvantages of a death-bed Repentance.

more advantages towards the doing it now, than thou wilt have then.

The cuſtom of ſin.

31. For firſt, The longer ſin hath kept poſſeſſion of the heart, the harder it will be to drive it out. It is true, if Repentance were nothing but a preſent ceaſing from the acts of ſin, the death-bed were fitteſt for it, for then we are diſabled from committing moſt ſins; but I have formerly ſhewed you, Repentance contains much more than ſo, there muſt be in it a ſincere hatred of ſin, and love of God. Now how unlikely is it that he which hath all his life loved ſin, cheriſht it in his boſom, and on the contrary abhorred God and goodneſs, ſhould in an inſtant quite change his affections, hate that ſin he loved, and love God and goodneſs, which before he utterly hated?

Bodily pains.

32. And ſecondly, The bodily pains that attend a Death-bed will diſtract thee, and make thee unable to attend the work of Repentance, which is a buſineſs of ſuch weight and difficulty, as will employ all our powers even when they are at the freſheſt.

Danger of unſincerity.

33. Conſider thoſe diſadvantages thou muſt then ſtruggle with, and then tell me what hope there is thou ſhalt then do that, which now upon much eaſier terms thou wilt not. But in the third place there is a danger behind beyond all theſe, and that is, That the Repentance which death drives a Man to, will not be a true Repentance; for in ſuch a caſe it is plain, it is only the fear of Hell puts him on it, which though it may be a good beginning where there is time after to perfect it, yet where it goes alone it can never avail for Salvation. Now that Death-bed Repentances are often only of this ſort, is too likely, when it is obſerved that many Men who have ſeemed to repent when they have thought Death approaching, have yet, after it hath pleaſed God to reſtore them to health, been as wicked (perhaps worſe) as ever they were before; which ſhews plainly, that there was no real change in them, and then ſurely had ſuch a Man died in that ſeeming Repentance, God, *who tries the heart*, would not have accepted it, which he ſaw was unſincere. When all theſe dangers are laid together, it will ſurely appear a moſt deſperate adventure for any Man to truſt to a Death-bed Repentance. Nor is it ever the leſs for that example of the penitent Thief, *Luke* 23. 43. which is by many ſo much depended on. For it is ſure his caſe and ours differ widely; he had never heard of Chriſt before, and ſo more could not be expected of him than to embrace him as ſoon as he was tendred to him: But we have had him offered, nay preſt upon us from our Cradles, and yet have rejected him. But if there were not this difference, it is but a faint hope can be raiſed only from a ſingle example, and another we find not in the whole Bible. The *Iſraelites* we read were *fed with Manna from Heaven*, but would you not think him ſtark mad that ſhould out of expectation of the like, neglect to provide himſelf any food? Yet it is full as reaſonable to depend upon this example as the other. I conclude all in the words of the Wiſe Man, *Eccl.* 12. 1. *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth before the evil days come.*

Faſting.

34. To this duty of Repentance, Faſting is very proper to be annexed. The Scripture uſually joyns them together; among the *Jews* the great day of atonement was to be kept with Faſting, as you may ſee by comparing *Lev.* 16. 31. with *Iſa.* 58. 5. and this by God's eſpecial appointment. And in the Prophets, when the people are called on to repent and humble themſelves, they are alſo called on to Faſt. Thus it is, *Joel* 2. 12. *Therefore now thus ſaith the Lord, Turn ye unto me with all your hearts, with faſting, and with weeping, &c.* Yea, ſo proper hath Faſting been accounted to Humiliation, that we ſee even wicked *Ahab* would not omit it in his, 2 *Kings* 21. 27. nor the Heathen *Ninevites* in theirs, *Jonah* 3. 5. nor is it leſs fit or leſs accep-

table ſince Chriſt, than it was before him. For we ſee he ſuppoſes it as a duty ſometimes to be performed, when he gives directions to avoid vainglory in it, *Matth. 6. 6.* and alſo aſſures us that if it be performed, as it ought, not to pleaſe Men but God, it will ſurely be rewarded by him. And accordingly we find it practiſed by the Saints, *Anna, Luke* 2. 37. *ſerved God with faſting and prayer:* Where it is obſervable, that it is reckoned as a ſervice of God, fit to be joyned with Prayers. And the Chriſtians of the firſt times were generally very frequent in the practice of it. Now though faſting be eſpecially proper to a time of humiliation, yet is it not ſo reſtrained to it, but it may be ſeaſonable, whenſoever we have any extraordinary thing to requeſt from God. Thus when *Eſther* was to endeavour the deliverance of her People from deſtruction, ſhe and all the *Jews* kept a ſolemn Faſt, *Eſth.* 4. 16. And thus when *Paul* and *Barnabas* were to be Ordained Apoſtles, there was Faſting joyned to Prayer, *Acts* 13. 3. and ſo it will be very fit for us, whenſoever we have need of any extraordinary directions, or aſſiſtance from God, whether concerning our temporal or ſpiritual concernments, thus to quicken our Prayers by Faſting. But above all occaſions, This of Humiliation ſeems moſt to require it; for beſides the advantages of kindling our zeal, which is never more neceſſary than when we beg for pardon of ſins, Faſting carries in it ſomewhat of revenge, which is reckoned as a ſpecial part of repentance, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. for by denying our Bodies the refreſhment of our ordinary food, we do inflict ſomewhat of puniſhment upon our ſelves for our former exceſſes, or whatever other ſins we at that time accuſe our ſelves of; which is a proper effect of that indignation which every ſinner ought to have againſt himſelf. And truly he that is ſo tender of himſelf that he can never find in his heart ſo much as to miſs a meal, by way of puniſhment for his faults, ſhews he is not much fallen out with himſelf, for committing them; and ſo wants that indignation which the Apoſtle in the forenamed Texts mentions as a part of true repentance.

Faſting a revenge upon our ſelves.

35. There is no doubt, but ſuch holy revenges upon our ſelves for ſins are very acceptable to God; yet we muſt not think that either thoſe, or any thing elſe we can do, can make ſatisfaction for our offences, for that nothing but the blood of Chriſt can do. And therefore on that, and not on any of our performances, we muſt depend for pardon. Yet ſince that blood ſhall never be applied to any but penitent ſinners, we are as much concern'd to bring forth all the fruits of repentance, as if our hopes depended on them only.

Such revenges acceptable with God; yet no ſatisfaction for ſins.

36. How often this duty of Faſting is to be performed, we have no direction in Scripture. That muſt be allotted by mens own Piety, according as their Health, or other conſiderations will allow. But as it is in Humiliation the frequenter returns we have of ſet times for it, the better; ſo it is likewiſe in Faſting, the oftner, the better, ſo it be not hurtful either to our healths, or to ſome other duty required of us. Nay perhaps Faſting may help ſome Men to more of thoſe times for Humiliation, than they would otherwiſe gain. For perhaps there are ſome, who cannot, without a manifeſt hindrance to their Calling, allow a whole day to that work, yet ſuch an one may at leaſt afford that time he would otherwiſe ſpend in eating: And ſo Faſting will be doubly uſeful towards ſuch a Man's Humiliation, both by helping him in the duty, and gaining him time for it.

Times of Faſting.

37. I have now gone through the firſt branch of our Duty to God, to wit, the acknowledging him for our God. The ſecond is, The having no other. Of which I need ſay little, as it is a forbidding of that groſſer ſort

Second Branch of our duty to God.

of Heatheniſh Idolatry, the worſhipping of Idols, which though it were once common in the World, yet is now ſo rare, that it is not likely any that ſhall read this will be concerned in it. Only I muſt ſay, That to pay Divine Worſhip to any Creature, be it Saint or Angel, yea, or the Image of Chriſt himſelf, is a tranſgreſſion againſt this ſecond branch of our duty to God, it being the imparting that to a Creature, which is due only to God, and therefore is ſtrictly to be abſtained from.

Inward Idolatry. 38. But there is another ſort of Idolatry, of which we are generally guilty, and that is, when we pay thoſe affections of Love, Fear, Truſt, and the like, to any Creature in a higher degree than we do to God: For that is the ſetting up that thing, whatſoever it is, for our God. And this inward kind of Idolatry, is that which provokes God to jealouſie, as well as the outward of worſhipping an Idol. I might enlarge much upon this, but becauſe ſome ſeverals of it have been toucht on in the former diſcourſe, I ſuppoſe it needleſs; and therefore ſhall now proceed to the ſecond Head of DUTY, that to our SELVES.

SUNDAY VI.

Duty to our Selves; of Sobriety; of Humility; the great Sin of Pride; of Vain-Glory, the Danger, Folly; the Means to prevent it: of Meekneſs, &c.

Duty to our Selves. Sect. 1. THIS DUTY to our SELVES is by S. *Paul* in the forementioned Text, *Tit.* 2. 12. ſumm'd up in this one word Soberly. Now by Soberly is meant our keeping within thoſe due bounds which God hath ſet us. My buſineſs will therefore be to tell you what are the particulars of this Sobriety: And that firſt, in reſpect of the Soul; ſecondly, in reſpect of the Body. The ſobriety of the Soul ſtands in a right governing its paſſions and affections; and to that there are many Vertues required. I ſhall give you the particulars of them.

Humility. 2. The firſt of them is Humility, which may well have the prime Place, not only in reſpect of the excellency of the Vertue, but alſo of its uſefulneſs towards the obtaining of all the reſt. This being the foundation on which all others muſt be built. And he that hopes to gain them without this, will prove but like that fooliſh builder Chriſt ſpeaks of, *Luk.* 6. 49. *Who built his houſe upon the ſand.* Of the humility towards God I have already ſpoken, and ſhewed the neceſſity of it, I am now to ſpeak of Humility as it concerns our ſelves, which will be found no leſs neceſſary than the former.

3. This Humility is of two ſorts, the firſt is the having a mean and low opinion of our ſelves, the ſecond is the being content that others ſhould have ſo of us. The firſt of theſe is contrary to Pride, the other to Vainglory. And that both theſe are abſolutely neceſſary to Chriſtians, I am now to ſhew you; which will, I conceive, beſt be done by laying before you, firſt, the Sin; ſecondly, the Danger; thirdly, the contrary Vices.

The great ſin of Pride. 4. And firſt, for Pride; The ſin of it is ſo great, that it caſt the Angels out of Heaven, and therefore if we may judge of ſin by the puniſhment, it was not only the firſt, but the greateſt ſin that ever the Devil himſelf hath been guilty of: But we need no better proof of the hainouſneſs of it, than the extreme hatefulneſs of it to God; which beſides that inſtance of his puniſhing the Devil, we may frequently find in the Scriptures, *Prov.* 16.5. *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.* And again, Chap. *6. 16.* where there is mention of ſeveral things the Lord hates, a proud look is ſet as the firſt of them; ſo *Jam.* 4. 7. *God reſiſteth the proud*; and divers other Texts there are to the ſame purpoſe, which ſhews the great hatred God bears to this ſin of Pride. Now ſince it is certain, God who is all goodneſs, hates nothing but as it is evil, it muſt needs follow, that where God hates in ſo great a degreee, there muſt be a great degree of evil.

The danger, Drawing into other ſins.

5. But ſecondly, PRIDE is not only very ſinful, but very dangerous; and that firſt, in reſpect of drawing us to other ſins; ſecondly, of betraying us to puniſhments. Firſt, Pride draws us to other ſins, wherein it ſhews it ſelf indeed to be the direct contrary to Humility; for as that is the root of all Vertue, ſo is this of all Vice. For he that is Proud ſets himſelf up as his own God, and ſo can never ſubmit himſelf to any other Rules or Laws than what he makes to himſelf. The ungodly, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *is ſo proud that he careth not for God, Pſal.* 10.4. Where you ſee, it is his Pride that makes him deſpiſe God. And when a Man is once come to that, he is prepared for the commiſſion of all ſins. I might inſtance in a multitude of particular ſins that naturally flow from this of Pride; as firſt, Anger, which the Wiſe Man ſets as the effect of Pride, *Prov.*21.24. calling it Proud Wrath; ſecondly, Strife and Contention; which he again notes to be the off-ſpring of Pride, *Prov.* 13. 10. *Only by pride cometh contention.* And both theſe are indeed moſt natural effects of Pride: For he that thinks very highly of himſelf, expects much ſubmiſſion and obſervance from others, and therefore cannot but rage and quarrel whenever he thinks it not ſufficiently paid. It would be infinite to mention all the fruits of this bitter root: I ſhall name but one more, and that is, that Pride not only betrays us to many ſins, but alſo makes them incurable in us, for it hinders the working of all Remedies.

Fruſtrating of remedies.

6. Thoſe Remedies muſt either come from God or Man; if from God, they muſt be either in the way of meekneſs and gentleneſs, or elſe of ſharpneſs and puniſhment. Now if God by his goodneſs eſſay to lead a Proud Man to repentance, he quite miſtakes God's meaning, and thinks all the Mercies he receives are but the reward of his own deſert, and ſo long 'tis ſure he will never think he needs repentance. But if on the other ſide God uſe him more ſharply, and lay afflictions and puniſhments upon him, thoſe in a Proud Heart work nothing but murmurings and hating of God, as if he did him injury in thoſe puniſhments. As for the Remedies that can be uſed by Man, they again muſt be either by way of correction, or exhortation; corrections from Man will ſure never work more on a Proud Heart, than thoſe from God, for he that can think God unjuſt in them, will much rather believe it of Man. And Exhortations will do as little. For let a Proud Man be admoniſh'd though never ſo mildly and lovingly, he looks on it as a diſgrace. And therefore inſtead of confeſſing or amending the fault, he falls to reproaching his reprover as an over-buſie or cenſorious perſon, and for that greateſt and moſt precious act of kindneſs, looks on him as his enemy. And now one that thus ſtubbornly reſiſts all means of cure, muſt be concluded in a moſt degenerous eſtate.

Betraying to puniſhment.

7. But beſides this danger of ſin, I told you there was another, that of puniſhment; and of this there will need little proof, when it is conſidered, that God is the Proud Man's profeſt enemy, that he hates and reſiſts him, as appeared in the Texts forecited: And then there can be little doubt, that he which hath ſo mighty an Adverſary, ſhall be ſure to ſmart for it. Yet beſides this general ground of concluſion, it may not be amiſs to mention

ſome of thoſe Texts which particularly threaten this ſin, as *Prov.* 16. 18. *Pride goeth before deſtruction, and an haughty ſpirit before a fall:* Again, *Prov.* 16. 5. *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; though hand joyn in hand, yet they ſhall not be unpuniſhed.* The decree it ſeems is unalterable, and whatever endeavours are uſed to preſerve the Proud Man, they are but vain, for he *ſhall not go unpuniſhed.* And this is very remarkable in the ſtory of *Nebuchadnezzar, Dan.* 4. who though a King, the greateſt in the World, yet for his Pride was driven from among Men, to dwell and feed with Beaſts. And it is moſt frequently ſeen, that this ſin meets with very extraordinary judgments even in this Life. But if it ſhould not, let not the Proud Man think that he hath eſcaped God's vengeance, for it is ſure there will be a moſt ſad reckoning in the next; for if God ſpared not the Angels for this ſin, but caſt them into Hell, let no Man hope to ſpeed better.

Its Folly. 8. In the third place, I am to ſhew you the great Folly of this ſin; and to do that, it will be neceſſary to conſider the ſeveral things whereof Men uſe to be proud; they are of Three ſorts, either thoſe which we call the Goods of Nature, or the Goods of Fortune, or the Goods of Grace.

In reſpect of the goods of Nature. 9. By the Goods of Nature, I mean Beauty, Strength, Wit, and the like, and the being proud of any of theſe is a huge folly. For firſt, We are very apt to miſtake and think our ſelves handſome or witty when we are not, and then there cannot be a more ridiculous Folly than to be proud of what we have not, and ſuch every one eſteems it in another Man, though he never ſuppoſes it his own caſe; and ſo never diſcerns it in himſelf. And therefore there is nothing more deſpicable amongſt all Men, than a proud fool; yet no Man that entertains high opinions of his own wit but is in danger to be thus deceived; a Man's own judgment of himſelf being of all others the leaſt to be truſted. But ſecondly, Suppoſe we be not out in judging, yet what is there in any of theſe natural endowments which is worth the being proud, there being ſcarce any of them which ſome Creature or other hath not in a greater degree than Man? How much does the whiteneſs of the Lily, and the redneſs of the Roſe, exceed the white and red of the faireſt face? What a multitude of Creatures is there, that far ſurpaſs Man in ſtrength and ſwiftneſs? And divers others there are, which, as far as concerns any uſeful ends of theirs, act much more wiſely than moſt of us; and are therefore often times in Scripture propoſed to us by way of Example. It is therefore ſurely great unreaſonableneſs for us to think highly of our ſelves, for ſuch things as are common to us with Beaſts and Plants. But thirdly, If they were as excellent as we fancy them, yet they are not at all durable, they are impaired and loſt by ſundry means; a frenzy will deſtroy the rareſt Wit; a ſickneſs decay the freſheſt Beauty, the greateſt Strength, or however old Age will be ſure to do all. And therefore to be proud of them is again a folly in this reſpect. But laſtly, whatever they are, we gave them not to our ſelves. No Man can think he did any thing towards the procuring his natural Beauty or Wit, and ſo can with no reaſon value himſelf for them.

The goods of Fortune. 10. In the ſecond place, The folly is as great to be proud of the Goods of Fortune; by them I mean Wealth and Honour, and the like; for it is ſure, they add nothing of true worth to the Man; ſomewhat of outward pomp and bravery they may help him to, but that makes no change in the Perſon. You may load an Aſs with Money, or deck him with rich Trappings, yet ſtill you will not make him a whit the nobler kind of Beaſt by either of them. Then ſecondly, Theſe are things we have no hold of, they vaniſh many times ere we are aware; he that is rich to day, may be poor to morrow, and then will be the leſs pitied by all in his poverty, the prouder he was when he was rich. Thirdly, We have them all, but as Stewards, to lay out for our Maſter's uſe, and therefore ſhould rather think how to make our accounts, than pride our ſelves in our receipts. Laſtly, Whatever of theſe we have, they, as well as the former, are not owing to our ſelves. But if they be lawfully gotten, we owe them only to God, whoſe bleſſing it is, that maketh rich, *Prov.* 10. 22. If unlawfully, we have them upon ſuch terms that we have very little reaſon to brag of them. And thus you ſee in theſe ſeveral reſpects, the folly of this ſecond ſort of Pride.

The goods of Grace.

11. The third is that of the goods of Grace; that is, any Vertue a Man hath. And here I cannot ſay, but the things are very valuable, they being infinitely more precious than all the world, yet nevertheleſs this is of all the reſt the higheſt folly. And that not only in the foregoing reſpect, that we help not our ſelves to it, Grace being above all things moſt immediately God's work in us, but eſpecially in this, that the being proud of Grace is the ſure way to loſe it. God who gives Grace to the Humble, will take it from the Proud. For if, as we ſee in the Parable, *Matth.* 25. 28. The Talent was taken from him who had only put it to no uſe at all, how ſhall he hope to have it continued to him that hath put it to ſo ill, that inſtead of trading with it for God, hath trafficked with it for Satan? And as he will loſe the Grace for the future, ſo he will loſe all the reward of it for the time paſt. For let a Man have done never ſo many good acts, yet if he be proud of them; that Pride ſhall be charged on him to his deſtruction, but the good ſhall never be remembred to his reward. And this proves it to be a moſt wretched folly to be proud of Grace. It is like that of Children, that pull thoſe things in pieces they are moſt fond of; but yet much worſe than that of theirs, for we not only loſe the thing (and that the moſt precious that can be imagined) but we muſt alſo be eternally puniſhed for doing ſo, there being nothing that ſhall be ſo ſadly reckoned for in the next world, as the abuſe of Grace; and certainly there can be no greater abuſe of it than to make it ſerve for an end ſo directly contrary to that for which it was given, it being given to make us Humble, not Proud, to magnifie God, not our ſelves.

Means of Humility.

12. Having ſhewed you thus much of this ſin, I ſuppoſe it will appear very neceſſary to be eſchewed; to which purpoſe it will firſt be uſeful to conſider what hath been already ſaid concerning it, and that ſo ſeriouſly, as may work in thee not ſome ſlight diſlike, but a deep and irreconcilable hatred to the ſin: Secondly, To be very watchful over thine own heart, that it cheriſh not any beginnings of it; never ſuffer it to feed on the fancy of thy own worth; but whenever any ſuch thought ariſes, beat it down immediately with the remembrance of ſome of thy follies or ſins, and ſo make this very motion of Pride an occaſion of Humility. Thirdly, Never to compare thy ſelf with thoſe thou thinkeſt more fooliſh or wicked than thy ſelf, that ſo thou mayeſt like the *Phariſee, Luke* 16. 11. extol thy ſelf for being better; but if thou wilt compare, do it with the Wiſe and Godly; and then thou wilt find thou comeſt ſo far ſhort as may help to pull down thy high eſteem of thy ſelf. Laſtly, To be very earneſt in Prayer, that God would root out all degrees of this ſin in thee, and make thee one of thoſe *poor in ſpirit, Matth.* 5. 3. to whom the bleſſing even of Heaven it ſelf is promiſed.

Vain-glory. The ſin. 13. The ſecond contrary to humility I told you was vain-glory. That is, a great thirſt after the praiſe of Men. And firſt, that this is a ſin, I need prove no otherwiſe, than by the words of our Saviour, *John* 5. 44. *How can ye believe, that receive honour one of another?* Where it appears, that it is not only a ſin, but ſuch an one as hinders the receiving of Chriſt into the heart, for ſo believing there ſignifies. This then in the ſecond *The danger.* place ſhews you likewiſe the great dangerouſneſs of this ſin,for if it be that which keeps Chriſt out of the heart, it is ſure it brings infinite danger, ſince all our ſafety, all our hope of eſcaping the wrath to come, ſtands in receiving him. But beſides the authority of this Text, common experience ſhews, that where-ever this ſin hath poſſeſſion, it endangers Men to fall into any other. For he that ſo conſiders the praiſe of Men, that he muſt at no hand part with it, when-ever the greateſt ſins come to be in faſhion and credit (as God knows many are now a-days) he will be ſure to commit them rather than run the diſgrace of being too ſingle and preciſe. I doubt there are many Conſciences can witneſs the truth of this, ſo that I need ſay no more to prove the danger of this ſin.

The folly. 14. The third thing I am to ſhew, is the folly of it; and that will appear firſt, by conſidering what it is we thus hunt after, nothing but a little Air, a blaſt, the breath of Men, it brings us in nothing of real advantage: For I am made never the wiſer nor the better for a Man's ſaying I am wiſe and good. Beſides, If I am commended, it muſt be either before my face or behind my back: If the former, it is very often flattery, and ſo the greateſt abuſe that can be offered, and then I muſt be very much a fool to be pleaſed with it. But if it be behind my back, I have not then ſo much as the pleaſure of knowing it; and therefore it is a ſtrange folly thus to purſue what is ſo utterly gainleſs. But ſecondly, It is not only gainleſs, but painful and uneaſie alſo. He that eagerly ſeeks praiſe, is not at all maſter of himſelf, but muſt ſuit all his actions to that end, and inſtead of doing what his own Reaſon and Conſcience (nay perhaps his worldly conveniency) directs him to, he muſt take care to do what will bring him in commendations, and ſo enſlave himſelf to every one that hath but a tongue to commend him. Nay, there is yet a further uneaſineſs in it, and that is, when ſuch a Man fails of his aim, when he miſſes the praiſe, and perhaps meets with the contrary, reproach, (which is no man's lot more often than the vain-glorious, nothing making a Man more deſpiſed) then what diſturbances and diſquiets, and even tortures of mind is he under? A lively inſtance of this you have in *Achitophel*, 2 *Sam.* 17. 23. who had ſo much of this, upon *Abſolom's* deſpiſing his counſel, that he choſe to rid himſelf of it, by hanging himſelf. And ſure this painfulneſs that thus attends this ſin, is ſufficient proof of the folly of it. Yet this is not all, it is yet further very hurtful. For if this vain-glory be concerning any good, or Chriſtian Action, it deſtroys all the fruit of it; he that prays or gives Alms to be ſeen of Men, *Matth.* 6. 2. muſt take that as his reward, *Verily I ſay unto you, they have their reward*; they muſt expect none from God, but the portion of thoſe Hypocrites, that *love the praiſe of men more than the praiſe of God.* And this is a miſerable folly to make ſuch an exchange. It is like the Dog in the Fable, who ſeeing in the water the ſhadow of that Meat he held in his mouth, catcht at the ſhadow, and ſo let go his Meat. Such Dogs, ſuch unreaſonable creatures are we, when we thus let go the Eternal rewards of Heaven, to catch at a few good words of Men. And yet we do not only loſe thoſe Eternal Joys, but procure to our ſelves the contrary, Eternal Miſeries, which is ſure the higheſt pitch of folly and madneſs. But if the vain-glory be not concerning any vertuous action, but only ſome indifferent thing, yet even there alſo it is very hurtful ; for vain-glory is a ſin that whereſoever it is placed, endangers our Eternal Eſtate, which is the greateſt of all miſchiefs. And even for the preſent it is obſervable, that of all other ſins it ſtands the moſt in its own light, hinders it ſelf of that very thing it purſues. For there are very few that thus hunt after praiſe, but they are diſcerned to do ſo, and that is ſure to eclipſe whatever praiſe-worthy thing they do, and brings ſcorn upon them inſtead of reputation. And then certainly we may juſtly condemn this ſin of folly which is ſo ill a manager even of its own deſign.

Helps against vain-glory.

15. You have ſeen how wretched a thing this vain-glory is in theſe ſeveral reſpects, the ſerious conſideration whereof may be one good means to ſubdue it, to which it will be neceſſary to add, firſt, a great watchfulneſs over thy ſelf; obſerve narrowly whether in any Chriſtian duty thou at all conſidereſt the praiſe of Men, or even in the moſt indifferent action, look whether thou haſt not too eager a deſire of it, and if thou findeſt thy ſelf inclined that way, have a very ſtrict eye upon it, and wherever thou findeſt it ſtirring, check and reſiſt it, ſuffer it not to be the end of thy actions: But in all matters of Religion let thy duty be the Motive; in all indifferent things of common life let Reaſon direct thee; and though thou mayeſt ſo far conſider in thoſe things the opinion of Men, as to obſerve the rules of common decency, yet never think any praiſe that comes in to thee from any thing of that kind worth the contriving for. Secondly, ſet up to thy ſelf another aim, *viz.* That of pleaſing God; Let that be thy enquiry when thou goeſt about any thing; whether it be approved by him. And then thou wilt not be at leiſure to conſider what praiſe it will bring thee from Men. And ſurely he that weighs of how much more moment it is to pleaſe God, who is able Eternally to reward us, than Man, whoſe applauſe can never do us any good, will ſurely think it reaſonable to make the former his only care. Thirdly, If at any time thou art praiſed, do not be much over-joyed with it, nor think a jot the better of thy ſelf; but if it be Vertue thou art praiſed for, remember it was God that wrought it in thee, and give him the Glory, never thinking any part of it belongs to thee: If it be ſome indifferent action ; then remember that it cannot deſerve praiſe, as having no goodneſs in it: But if it be a bad one, (as amongſt Men ſuch are ſometimes likelieſt to be commended) then it ought to ſet thee a trembling inſtead of rejoycing, for then that woe of our Saviour's belongs to thee, *Luke* 6. 26. *Wo unto you when men ſpeak well of you, for ſo did their Fathers to the falſe Prophets*; and there is not a greater ſign of a hardned heart, than when Men can make their ſins the matter of their glory. In the laſt place, Let thy Prayers aſſiſt in the fight with this corruption.

Meekneſs.

16. A ſecond VERTUE is MEEKNESS, that is, a calmneſs and quietneſs of Spirit, contrary to the rages and impatiencies of Anger. This Vertue may be exerciſed either in reſpect of God, or his Neighbour. That towards God I have already ſpoken of, under the head of Humility, and that towards our Neighbour, I ſhall hereafter. All I have here to ſay of it is, how it becomes a duty to our ſelves: That it does in reſpect of the great advantage we reap by it; which in meer kindneſs to our ſelves, we are to look after. And to prove that it brings us this great advantage, I need ſay no more, but that this meekneſs is that to which Chriſt hath pronounced a bleſſing, *Matth.* 5. 5. *Bleſſed are the meek*, and not only in the next world, but even in this too, *they ſhall inherit the earth*. Indeed

Advantages of it.

none but the meek perſon hath the true enjoyment of any thing in the world, for the angry and impatient are like ſick people, who, we uſe to ſay, cannot enjoy the greateſt proſperities: For let things be never ſo fair without, they will raiſe ſtorms within their own breaſts. And ſurely whoever hath either in himſelf, or others, obſerved the great uneaſineſs of this paſſion of anger, cannot chuſe but think meekneſs a moſt pleaſant thing.

17. Beſides, it is alſo a moſt honourable thing, for it is that whereby we reſemble Chriſt, *Learn of me*, ſaith he, *for I am meek and lowly in heart, Matth.* 11.28. It is alſo that whereby we conquer our ſelves, overcome our own unruly paſſions, which of all Victories is the greateſt and moſt noble. Laſtly, It is that which makes us behave our ſelves like Men, whereas anger gives us the fierceneſs and wildneſs of Savage Beaſts. And accordingly the one is by all eſteemed and loved, whereas the other is hated and abhorred, every man ſhunning a man in rage as they would a furious Beaſt.

18. Farther yet, Meekneſs is the ſobriety of the mind, whereas Anger is the direct madneſs; it puts a Man wholly out of his own power, and makes him do ſuch things as himſelf in his ſober temper abhors; how many Men have done thoſe things in their rage, which they have repented all their lives after? And therefore ſurely as much as a Man is more honourable than a Beaſt, a ſober man than a mad man, ſo much hath this vertue of Meekneſs the advantage of honour above the contrary vice of Anger.

19. Again, Meekneſs makes any condition tolerable and eaſie to be endured. He that meekly bears any ſuffering, takes off the edge of it that it cannot wound him; whereas he that frets and rages at it, whets it and makes it much ſharper than it would be; nay, in ſome caſes makes that ſo, which would not elſe be ſo at all, as particularly, in the caſe of reproachful words, which in themſelves can do us no harm, they neither hurt our Bodies, nor leſſen our Eſtates, the only miſchief they can do us is to make us angry, and then our anger may do us many more, whereas he that meekly paſſes them by, is never the worſe for them, nay, the better; for he ſhall be rewarded by God for that patience. Much more might be ſaid to recommend this Vertue to us, in reſpect of our own preſent advantage, but I ſuppoſe this may ſuffice to perſwade Men to eſteem of it. The harder matter will be to gain them to the practice of it, wherein Men pretend I know not what difficulties of natural conſtitutions, and the like; yet ſure there is no Man of ſo cholerick a temper, but if he did heartily ſet about it, would find it were not impoſſible in ſome good meaſure to ſubdue it: But then he muſt be diligent in uſing means to that end. Divers of theſe means there are, I ſhall mention ſome few.

Means of obtaining it.

20. As firſt, The imprinting deep in our minds the lovelineſs and benefits of Meekneſs, together with the uglineſs and miſchiefs of Anger. Secondly, to ſet before us the Example of Chriſt, who endured all reproaches, yea, torments with perfect patience, That was *led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter*, Iſaiah, 53.7. *That when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he ſuffered threatned not*, 1 *Pet.* 2.23. And if he, the Lord of Glory, ſuffered thus meekly and unjuſtly from his own Creatures, with what face can we ever complain of any injury done to us? Thirdly, To be very watchful to prevent the very firſt beginnings of Anger, and to that purpoſe to mortifie all inward peeviſhneſs and frowardneſs of mind, which is a ſin in it ſelf, though it proceed no further, but will alſo be ſure, if it be cheriſhed, to break out into open effects of anger. Therefore whenever thou findeſt

the leaſt riſing of it within thee, make as much haſte to check it, as thou wouldſt to quench a fire in thy houſe; but be ſure thou bring no fewel to it, by entertaining any thoughts that may encreaſe it. And at ſuch time eſpecially keep a moſt ſtrict watch over thy tongue, that it break not out into any angry ſpeeches, for that breath will fan the fire, not only in thine adverſary, but thy ſelf too; therefore though thy heart be hot within, ſtifle the flame, and let it not break out; and the greater the temptation is, the more earneſtly liſt up thy heart to God to aſſiſt thee to overcome it. Fourthly, often remember how great puniſhments thy ſins have deſerved, and then, whether thy ſufferings be from God or Man, thou wilt acknowledge them to be far ſhort of what is due to thee, and therefore wilt be aſhamed to be impatient at them.

Conſideration.

Of our State.

The Rule by which to try our State.

21. The third vertue is CONSIDERATION, and this in a moſt ſpecial manner we owe to our Souls. For without it we ſhall, as raſh unadviſed people uſe to do, ruſh them into infinite perils. Now this Conſideration is either of our State, or of our Actions. By our State, I mean what our condition is to God-ward, whether it be ſuch that we may reaſonably conclude our ſelves in his favour. This it much concerns us to conſider and examine, and that not by thoſe eaſie rules Men are apt to frame to themſelves, as whether they believe that Chriſt died for their ſins; that they are of the number of the Elect, and ſhall certainly be ſaved: if theſe and the like were all that were required to put us into God's favour, none but ſome very melancholy perſon could ever be out of it; for we are apt enough generally to believe comfortably of our ſelves. But the Rules God hath given us in his Word are thoſe by which we muſt be tried at the laſt day, and therefore are certainly the only ſafe ones by which to try our ſelves now. And the ſumm of thoſe are, that whoſoever continues in any one wilful ſin, is not in his favour, nor can, if he do ſo die, hope for any mercy at his hand.

The danger of Inconſideration.

22. Now it is highly neceſſary we ſhould conſider what our condition is in this reſpect: For ſince our life is nothing but a puff of breath in our Noſtrils, which may for ought we know be taken from us the next minute, it nearly concerns us to know how we are provided for another world, that ſo in caſe we want at preſent that Oil in our Lamps wherewith we are to meet the Bridegroom, *Matth.* 25.8. we may timely get it, and not for want of it be ever ſhut out like the fooliſh Virgins from his preſence. The neglect of this conſideration hath undone many Souls, ſome by too eaſie a belief that they were in a good condition, without conſidering and trying themſelves by the foregoing Rule, but preſuming either upon ſome ſlight outward performances, or upon ſuch a falſe Faith as I even now deſcribed; others by the wretched careleſs going on, without ſo much as asking themſelves what their condition is, but hope they ſhould do as well as their Neighbours, and ſo never enquiring farther; which wretched careleſneſs will as certainly undo the ſpiritual, as the like would do the temporal eſtate; yet in that every Man is wiſe enough to foreſee, that a Man that never takes any accounts of his Eſtate to ſee whether he be worth ſomething or nothing, will be ſure to be a beggar in the end. But in this far weightier matter we can generally be thus improvident.

Our actions. Before we do them.

23. The ſecond thing we are to conſider, is our Actions, and thoſe either before or after the doing of them. In the firſt place we are to conſider before we act, and not to do any thing raſhly or headily; but firſt, to adviſe with our Conſciences, whether this be lawful to be done: for he that follows his own inclination, and does every thing which that moves him to,

ſhall be ſure to fall into a multitude of ſins. Therefore conſider ſoberly, and be aſſured of the lawfulneſs of the thing before thou venture to do it. This adviſedneſs is in all worldly things accounted ſo neceſſary a part of Wiſdom, that no Man is accounted wiſe without it; a raſh man we look upon as the next degree to a fool. And yet it is ſure, there is not ſo much need of looking about us in any thing as in what concerns our Souls, and that not only in reſpect of the great value of them above all things elſe, but alſo in regard of the great danger they are in, as hath been ſhewed more at large in the beginning of the Treatiſe.

After they are done.

24. Secondly, We are to conſider our actions when they are paſt alſo, that is, we are to examine whether they have been ſuch as are allowable by the Laws of Chriſt. This is very neceſſary whether they be good or bad; if they be good, the recalling them helpeth us to the comfort of a good Conſcience, and that comfort again encourageth us to go on in the like; and beſides, it ſtirs us up to thankfulneſs to God, by whoſe Grace alone we were enabled to do them. But if they be bad, then it is eſpecially neceſſary that we thus examine them, for without this it is impoſſible we ſhould ever come to amendment; for unleſs we obſerve them to have been amiſs, we can never think it needful to amend, but ſhall ſtill run on from one wickedneſs to another, which is the greateſt curſe any Man can lie under.

Frequency of Conſideration.

Danger of omitting it.

25. The oftner therefore we uſe this Conſideration, the better, for the leſs likely it is that any of our ſins ſhall eſcape our knowledge. It is much to be wiſht that every Man would thus every night try the actions of the day, that ſo, if he have done any thing amiſs, he may ſoon check himſelf for it, and ſettle his reſolutions againſt it, and not let it grow on to a habit and courſe. And that he may alſo early beg God's pardon, which will the eaſier be had the ſooner it is asked, every delay of that being a great increaſe of the ſin. And ſurely whoever means to take an account of himſelf at all, will find this the eaſier courſe; it being much eaſier to do it ſo a little at a time, and while paſſages are freſh in his memory, than to take the account of a long time together. Now if it be conſidered, that every wilful ſin muſt have a particular Repentance before it can be pardoned, methinks men ſhould tremble to ſleep without that Repentance; for what aſſurance hath any Man that lies down in his Bed, that he ſhall ever riſe again? And then how dangerous is the condition of that Man that ſleeps in an unrepented ſin? The weighing of theſe ſeveral Motives may be a means, by God's bleſſing, to bring us to the practice of this Duty of Conſideration in all the parts of it.

SUNDAY VII.

*Of Contentedneſs and the contraries to it; **Murmuring, Ambition, Covetouſneſs, Envy**; Helps to Contentedneſs; **of Duties which concern our Bodies**; of Chaſtity, &c. Helps to it; of Temperance.*

Contentedneſs.

Sect. 1. THE Fourth VERTUE is CONTENTEDNES, and this ſurely is a Duty we much owe to our ſelves, it being that without which it is impoſſible to be happy. This Contentedneſs is a well-pleaſedneſs with that condition, whatever it is, that God hath placed us in, not murmuring and repining at our lot, but chearfully welcoming whatſoever God ſends. How great, and withal how pleaſant a vertue this is, may appear by the contrariety it hath to ſeveral great and painful Vices;

ſo that where this is rooted in the heart, it ſubdues not only ſome ſuch ſingle ſin, but a cluſter of them together.

Contrary to murmuring.

2. And firſt, It is contrary to all murmuring in general, which is a ſin moſt hateful to God, as may appear by his ſharp puniſhments of it on the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs, as you may read in ſeveral places of the Book of *Exodus*, and *Numbers.* And ſurely it is alſo very painful and uneaſie to a Man's ſelf; for if, as the Pſalmiſt ſaith, it be a *joyful and pleaſant thing to be thankful*, we may by the Rule of contraries conclude it is a ſad and unpleaſant thing to be murmuring, and, I doubt not, every Man's own experience will confirm the truth of it.

To Ambition.

3. Secondly, It is contrary to Ambition; the ambitious Man is always diſliking his preſent condition, and that makes him ſo greedily to ſeek a higher, whereas he that is content with his own, lies quite out of the road of this temptation. Now Ambition is not only a great ſin in it ſelf, but it puts men upon many other: There is nothing ſo horrid, which a Man that eagerly ſeeks greatneſs will ſtick at; Lying, Perjury, Murder, or any thing will down with him, if they ſeem to tend to his advancement; And the uneaſineſs of it is anſwerable to the ſin. This none can doubt of that conſiders what a multitude of fears and jealouſies, cares and diſtractions there are that attend Ambition in its progreſs, beſides the great and publick ruines that uſually befal it in the end. And therefore ſure Contentedneſs is in this reſpect as well a Happineſs as a Vertue.

To Covetouſneſs.

4. Thirdly, It is contrary to Covetouſneſs, this the Apoſtle witneſſeth, *Heb.* 13. 5. *Let your converſation be without covetouſneſs, and be content with ſuch things as ye have*; where you ſee Contentedneſs is ſet as the direct contrary to Covetouſneſs. But of this there needs no other Proof than common experience; for we ſee the Covetous Man never thinks he hath enough, and therefore can never be content; for no Man can be ſaid to be ſo that thirſts after any thing he hath not. Now that you may ſee how excellent and neceſſary a Vertue this is that ſecures us againſt Covetouſneſs, it will not be amiſs a little to conſider the nature of that ſin.

Covetouſneſs contrary to our Duty to God,

5. That it is a very great crime, is moſt certain, for it is contrary to the very foundation of all good Life; I mean thoſe three great Duties, to God, to our Selves, to our Neighbours, Firſt, It is ſo contrary to our Duty to God, that Chriſt himſelf tells us, *Luke* 16. 13. *We cannot ſerve God and Mammon;* He that ſets his heart upon Wealth, muſt neceſſarily take it off from God. And this we daily ſee in the Covetous Man's practice, he is ſo eager in the gaining of Riches, that he hath no time or care to perform duty to God; let but a good bargain, or opportunity of gain come in his way, Prayer and all duties of Religion muſt be neglected to attend it. Nay, when the committing the greateſt ſin againſt God may be likely either to get or ſave him ought, his love of Wealth quickly perſwades him to commit it.

to our Selves.

6. Secondly, It is contrary to the Duty we owe our Selves, and that both in reſpect of our Souls and Bodies. The Covetous Man deſpiſes his Soul, ſells that to Eternal Deſtruction for a little pelf; For ſo every Man does that by any unlawful means ſeeks to enrich himſelf; nay, though he do it not by unlawful means, yet if he have once ſet his heart upon Wealth, he is that covetous Perſon upon whom the Apoſtle hath pronounced, *That he ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of God*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 10. Nor doth he only offend againſt his Soul but his Body too. For he often denies that thoſe neceſſary refreſhments it wants, and for which his Wealth (as far as it concerns himſelf) was given him. This is ſo conſtantly the cuſtom of rich Miſers, that I need not prove it to you.

7. In

To our neighbours.

7. In the third place, Covetouſneſs is contrary to the duty we owe to our Neighbours. And that in both the parts of it, Juſtice and Charity: He that loves Money immoderately, will not care whom he cheats and defrauds, ſo he may bring in gain to himſelf? And from hence ſpring thoſe many tricks of deceit and couzenage ſo common in the World. As for Charity, that is never to be hoped for from a covetous Man, who dreads the leſſening of his own heaps more than the ſtarving of his poor brother. You ſee how great a ſin this is, that we may well ſay of it as the Apoſtle doth 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. *The love of money is the root of all evil.* And it is not much leſs uneaſie than wicked, for between the care of getting and the fear of loſing, the covetous Man enjoys no quiet hour. Therefore every Man is deeply concerned, as he tenders his happineſs either in this World or the next, to guard himſelf againſt this ſin, which he can no way do, but by poſſeſſing his heart with this Vertue of Contentedneſs.

Contentedneſs contrary to Envy.

8. In the fourth place it is contrary to Envy, for he that is content with his own condition hath no temptation to envy anothers: How unchriſtian a ſin this of Envy is, ſhall hereafter be ſhewed; at the preſent, I need ſay no more, but that it is alſo a very uneaſie one, it frets and gnaws the very heart of him that harbours it. But the worſe this ſin is, the more excellent ſtill is this Grace of Contentedneſs, which frees us from it. I ſuppoſe I have ſaid enough to make you think this a very lovely and deſirable Vertue. And ſure it were not impoſſible to be gained by any, that would but obſerve theſe few directions.

Helps to Contentedneſs.

9. Firſt, To conſider, that whatever our eſtate and condition in any reſpect be, it is that which is allotted us by God, and therefore is certainly the beſt for us, he being much better able to judge for us, than we for our ſelves; and therefore to be diſpleaſed at it is in effect to ſay, we are wiſer than he. Secondly, Conſider throughly the vanity of all worldly things, how very little there is in them, while we have them; and how uncertain we are to keep them; but above all, in how little ſtead they will ſtand us at the day of Death or Judgment, and then thou canſt not think any of them much worth the deſiring, and ſo wilt not be diſcontented for want of them. Thirdly, Suffer not thy fancy to run on things thou haſt not; many have put themſelves out of love with what they have, only by thinking what they want. He that ſees his Neighbour poſſeſs ſomewhat, which himſelf hath not, is apt to think how happy he ſhould be, if he were in that Man's condition, and in the mean time never thinks of enjoying his own, which yet perhaps in many reſpects may be much happier than that of his neighbours which he ſo much admires. For we look but upon the outſide of other men's conditions; and many a Man that is envied by his neighbours, as a wonderful happy perſon, hath yet ſome ſecret trouble, which makes him think much otherwiſe of himſelf. Therefore never compare thy condition in any thing with thoſe thou counteſt more proſperous than thy ſelf, but rather do it with thoſe thou knoweſt more unhappy, and then thou wilt find cauſe to rejoyce in thy own portion. Fourthly, Conſider how far thou art from deſerving any good thing from God, and then thou canſt not but with *Jacob, Gen.* 32. 10. confeſs that thou art *not worthy of the leaſt of thoſe mercies* thou enjoyeſt, and inſtead of murmuring that they are no more, wilt ſee reaſon to admire, and praiſe the bounty of God, that they are ſo many. Fifthly, Be often thinking of the joys laid up for thee in Heaven: Look upon that as thy home, on this World only as an Inn, where thou art fain to take up in thy paſſage; and then as a Traveller expects not the ſame conveniences at an Inn,

that he hath at home; ſo thou haſt reaſon to be content with whatever entertainment thou findeſt here, knowing thou art upon thy journey to a place of Infinite Happineſs, which will make an abundant amends for all the uneaſineſs, and hardſhip thou canſt ſuffer in the way. Laſtly, Pray to God, from whom all good things do come, that he will to all his other bleſſings, add this of a contented mind, without which thou canſt have no taſte or reliſh of any other.

Diligence.

10. A fifth Duty is DILIGENCE: This is made up of two parts Watchfulneſs and Induſtry, and both theſe we owe to our Souls.

Watchfulneſs againſt ſin.

11. Firſt, Watchfulneſs, in obſerving all the dangers that threaten them. Now ſince nothing can endanger our Souls, but ſin, this watchfulneſs is principally to be employed againſt that: And as in a beſieged City where there is any weak part, there it is neceſſary to keep the ſtrongeſt guard; ſo it is here, where-ever thou findeſt thy inclinations ſuch, as are moſt likely to betray thee to ſin, there it concerns thee to be eſpecially watchful. Obſerve therefore carefully to what ſins either thy natural temper, thy company, or thy courſe of life do particularly incline thee; and watch thy ſelf very narrowly in thoſe; yet do not ſo lay out all thy care on thoſe, as to leave thy ſelf open to any other, for that may give Satan as much advantage on the other ſide; but let thy watch be general, againſt all ſin, though in a ſpecial manner againſt thoſe, which are like oftneſt to aſſault thee.

Induſtry in improving gifts.

12. The ſecond part of Diligence, is Induſtry or Labour, and this alſo we owe to our Souls, for without it they will as little proſper as the Vineyard of the ſluggard; which *Solomon* deſcribes, *Prov.* 24. 30. For there is a husbandry of the Soul, as well as of the Eſtate, and the end of the one, as of the other, is the increaſing and improving of its Riches. Now the riches of the Soul are either Natural or Divine. By the Natural I mean its Faculties or Reaſon, Wit, Memory, and the like; by the Divine I mean the Graces of God, which are not the Souls Natural Portion, but are given immediately by God; and both theſe we are to take care to improve, they being both Talents intruſted to us for that purpoſe.

Of Nature.

13. The way of improving the Natural, is by imploying them ſo, as may bring in moſt honour to God: We muſt not let them lie idle by us through ſloth, neither muſt we overwhelm them with intemperance, and brutiſh pleaſures, which is the caſe of too many, but we muſt imploy them, and ſet them on work. But then we muſt be ſure it be not in the Devils ſervice; like many who ſet their Wits only to the profaning of God, or cheating their Neighbours, and ſtuff their memories with ſuch filthineſs, as ſhould never once enter their thoughts; our uſe of them muſt be ſuch, as may bring in moſt Glory to God, moſt benefit to our Neighbours, and may beſt fit us to make our accounts, when God ſhall come to reckon with us for them.

Of Grace.

14. But the other part of the Souls Riches, is yet more precious, that is, Grace, and of this we muſt be eſpecially careful to husband and improve it. This is a duty expreſly commanded us by the Apoſtle, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. *Grow in Grace.* And again in the firſt Chapter of that Epiſtle, verſe 5. *Give all diligence to add to your faith vertue, and to vertue knowledge, &c.* Now the eſpecial means of improving Grace, is by imploying it, that is, by doing thoſe things, for the enabling of us whereunto it was given us: This is a ſure means, not only in reſpect of that eaſineſs, which a cuſtom of any thing brings in the doing of it, but principally, as it hath the promiſe of God, who hath promiſed, *Matth.* 25. 29. That *to him that hath* (that is, hath made uſe of what he hath) *ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance.*

He that diligently and faithfully employs the firſt beginnings of Grace, ſhall yet have more, and he that in like manner husbands that more, ſhall yet have a greater degree; ſo that what *Solomon* ſaith of Temporal Riches, is alſo true of Spiritual, *The hand of the diligent maketh rich.*

To improve good motions.

15. Therefore whenever thou findeſt any good motions in thy heart, remember that is a ſeaſon for this Spiritual Husbandry: If thou haſt but a check of Conſcience againſt any ſin thou liveſt in, drive that on till it come to a hatred; and then that hatred, till it come to reſolution; then from that reſolution, proceed to ſome endeavours againſt it. Do this faithfully and ſincerely, and thou ſhalt certainly find the Grace of God aſſiſting thee, not only in every of theſe ſteps, but alſo enabling thee to advance ſtill higher, till thou come to ſome Victory over it. Yet to this induſtry thou muſt not fail to add thy Prayers alſo, there being a promiſe that God will *give the holy Spirit to them that ask it, Matth.* 7. 11. And therefore they that ask it not, have no reaſon to expect it. But it muſt be asked with ſuch an earneſtneſs, as is ſome way anſwerable to the value of the thing, which being infinitely more precious than all the World, both in reſpect of its own worth, and its uſefulneſs to us, we muſt beg it with much more zeal and earneſtneſs, than all temporal bleſſings, or elſe we ſhew our ſelves deſpiſers of it.

The danger of the contrary.

16. Having directed you to the means of improving Grace, I ſhall, to quicken you to it, mention the great danger of the contrary; and that is not as in other things, the loſing only thoſe further degrees, which our Induſtry might have helped us to, but it is the loſing even of what we already have; *For from him that hath not* (that is again, hath not made uſe of what he hath) *ſhall be taken away even that which he hath, Matth.* 25. 29. God will withdraw the Grace, which he ſees ſo neglected, as we ſee in that Parable; the Talent was taken from him that had only hid it in a Napkin, and had brought in no gain to his Lord. And this is a moſt ſad puniſhment, the greateſt that can befal any Man, before he comes to Hell: indeed it is ſome kind of foretaſte of it, it is the delivering him up to the power of the Devil, and it is the baniſhing him from the face of God, which are not the leaſt parts of the miſery of the damned, and it is alſo the binding a Man over to that fuller portion of wretchedneſs in another world; for that is the laſt doom of the unprofitable ſervant, *Matth.* 25. 30. *Caſt ye the unprofitable Servant into outer darkneſs, there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.* You ſee there are no light dangers that attend this neglect of Grace, and therefore if we have any love, nay, any common pity to our Souls, we muſt ſet our ſelves to this Induſtry. I have now done with thoſe VERTUES which reſpect our SOULS, I come now to thoſe which concern our BODIES.

Chaſtity.

17. The firſt of which is CHASTITY or PURITY, which may well be ſet in the front of the duties we owe to our Bodies, ſince the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 6. 18. ſets the contrary as the eſpecial ſin againſt them, *He that committeth fornication, ſinneth againſt his own body.*

18. Now this Vertue of Chaſtity conſiſts in a perfect abſtaining from all kinds of uncleanneſs, not only that of Adultery, and Fornication, but all other more unnatural ſorts of it committed either upon our ſelves, or with any other. In a word, all acts of that kind are utterly againſt Chaſtity, ſave only in lawful marriage. And even there men are not to think themſelves let looſe to pleaſe their brutiſh appetites, but are to keep themſelves within ſuch rules of moderarion, as agree to the ends of marriage, which being theſe two, the begetting of Children, and the avoiding of Fornication,

nication, nothing muſt be done which may hinder the firſt of theſe ends; and the ſecond aiming only at the ſubduing of Luſt, the keeping Men from any ſinful effects of it, is very contrary to that end to make Marriage an occaſion of heightning and enflaming it.

Uncleanneſs forbidden in the very loweſt degrees.

19. But this Vertue of Chaſtity reacheth not only to the reſtraining of the groſſer act, but to all lower degrees; it ſets a guard upon our eyes, according to that of our Saviour, *Matth.* 5. 28. *He that looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his heart*; and upon our hand, as appears by what Chriſt adds in that place, *If thy hand offend thee cut it off:* So alſo upon our tongues, that they ſpeak no immodeſt or filthy words, *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, Epheſ.* 4. 29. Nay, upon our very thoughts and fancies, we muſt not entertain any foul or filthy deſires, not ſo much as the imagination of any ſuch thing. Therefore he that forbears the groſſer act, and yet allows himſelf in any of theſe, it is to be ſuſpected that it is rather ſome outward reſtraint that keeps him from it, than the conſcience of the ſin. For if it were that, it would keep him from theſe too, theſe being ſins alſo, and very great ones in God's ſight. Beſides, he that lets himſelf looſe to theſe, puts himſelf in very great danger of the other, it being much more eaſie to abſtain from all, than to ſecure againſt the one, when the other is allowed. But above all, it is to be conſidered that even theſe lower degrees are ſuch as make Men very odious in God's Eyes, who ſeeth the heart, and loves none that are not pure there.

The miſchiefs of it.

20. The lovelineſs of this Vertue of Chaſtity needs no other way of deſcribing, than by conſidering the loathſomneſs and miſchiefs of the contrary ſin, which is firſt, very brutiſh: Thoſe deſires are but the ſame that the beaſts have, and then how far are they ſunk below the nature of Men, that can boaſt of their ſins of that kind, as of their ſpecial excellency? When, if that be the meaſure, a Goat is the more excellent creature. But indeed they that eagerly purſue this part of Beſtiality, do often leave themſelves little, beſides their humane ſhape, to difference them from Beaſts: This ſin ſo clouds the underſtanding, and defaceth the reaſonable Soul. Therefore *Solomon* very well deſcribes the young Man that was going to the Harlot's houſe, *Prov.* 7. 22. *He goeth after her as an Ox goeth to the ſlaughter.*

To the Soul.

To the Body.

21. Nor ſecondly, are the effects of it better to the Body than to the Mind. The many foul and filthy, beſides painful diſeaſes, which often follow this ſin, are ſufficient witneſſes how miſchievous it is to the Body. And alas, how many are there that have thus made themſelves the Devils Martyrs? ſuffered ſuch torments in the purſuit of this ſin, as would exceed the invention of the greateſt Tyrant? Surely they that pay thus dear for damnation, very well deſerve to enjoy the purchace.

The judgments of God againſt it.

22. But thirdly, Beſides the natural fruits of this ſin, it is attended with very great and heavy Judgments from God; the moſt extraordinary and miraculous Judgment that ever befel any place, Fire and Brimſtone from Heaven upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, was for this ſin of uncleanneſs: And many examples likewiſe of God's vengeance may be obſerved on particular Perſons for this ſin. The Inceſt of *Amnon* coſt him his life, as you may read, 2 *Sam.* 13. *Zimri* and *Cozbi* were ſlain in the very act, *Numb.* 25. 8. And no perſon that commits the like hath any aſſurance it ſhall not be his own caſe. For how ſecretly ſoever it be committed, it cannot be hid from God, who is the ſure avenger of all ſuch wickedneſs. Nay, God hath very particularly threatned this ſin, 1 *Cor.* 3. 17. *If any man defile the*

the Temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy. This ſin of uncleanneſs is a kind of Sacrilege, a polluting thoſe Bodies which God hath choſen for his Temples, and therefore no wonder, if it be thus heavily puniſhed.

It ſhuts out from Heaven.

23. Laſtly, This ſin ſhuts us out from the Kingdom of Heaven, wherein no impure thing can enter. And we never find any liſt of thoſe ſins, which bar Men thence, but this of uncleanneſs hath a ſpecial place in it. Thus it is, *Gal.* 5. 19. and ſo again, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. If we will thus pollute our ſelves, we are fit company only for thoſe black Spirits, the Devil and his Angels, and therefore with them we muſt expect our portion, where our flames of luſt ſhall end in flames of fire.

Helps to Chaſtity.

24. All this laid together, may ſurely recommend the vertue of Chaſtity to us, for the preſerving of which we muſt be very careful, firſt, to check the beginnings of the temptation, to caſt away the very firſt fancy of luſt with indignation; for if you once fall to parley and talk with it, it gains ſtill more upon you, and then it will be harder to reſiſt; Therefore your way in this temptation is to fly rather than fight with it. This is very neceſſary, not only that we may avoid the danger of proceeding to act the ſin, but alſo in reſpect of the preſent fault of entertaining ſuch fancies, which of it ſelf, though it ſhould never proceed further, is, as hath been ſhewed, a great abomination before God. Secondly, Have a ſpecial care to fly idleneſs, which is the proper ſoil for theſe filthy weeds to grow in, and keep thy ſelf always buſied in ſome innocent or vertuous imployment; for then theſe fancies will be leſs apt to offer themſelves. Thirdly, Never ſuffer thy ſelf to recal any unclean paſſages of thy former life with delight, for that is to act over the ſin again, and will be ſo reckoned by God; nay, perhaps thus deliberately to think of it may be a greater guilt than a raſh acting of it. For this both ſhews thy heart to be ſet upon filthineſs, and is alſo a preparation to more acts of it. Fourthly, Forbear the company of ſuch light and wanton Perſons, as either by the filthineſs of their diſcourſe, or any other means, may be a ſnare to thee. Fifthly, Pray earneſtly, that God would give thee the Spirit of Purity, eſpecially at the time of any preſent temptation. Bring the unclean Devil to Chriſt to be caſt out, as did the Man in the Goſpel; and if it will not be caſt out with Prayer alone, add Faſting to it; but be ſure thou do not keep up the flame by any high or immoderate feeding. The laſt remedy when the former prove vain, is marriage, which becomes a duty to him that cannot live innocently without it. But even here there muſt be care taken, leſt this which ſhould be for his good, become not to him an occaſion of falling for want of ſobriety in the uſe of Marriage. But this I have touch'd on already, and therefore need add no more but an earneſt intreaty, that Men would conſider ſeriouſly of the foulneſs and danger of this ſin of uncleanneſs, and not let the commonneſs of it leſſen their hatred of it, but rather make them abhor that ſhameleſs impudence of the World, that can make light of this ſin againſt which God hath pronounced ſuch heavy curſes, *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*, *Heb.* 13. 4. and ſo he will certainly do all ſorts of unclean perſons whatſoever,

Temperance.

25. The ſecond VERTUE that concerns our Bodies is TEMPERANCE: And the exerciſes of that are divers, as firſt, Temperance in Eating; ſecondly, in Drinking; thirdly, in Sleep; fourthly, in Recreation; fifthly, in Apparel. I ſhall ſpeak of them ſeverally; and firſt of Temperance in Eating. This Temperance is obſerved when our Eating is agreeable to thoſe ends to which Eating is by God and Nature deſigned; thoſe are firſt, the Being; ſecondly, the Well-being of our Bodies.

In Eating.

Ends of Eating.

Preſerving of life.

26. Man is of ſuch a frame that Eating becomes neceſſary to him for the preſerving of his life; hunger being a natural diſeaſe which will prove deadly if not prevented, and the only Phyſick for it is Eating, which is therefore become a neceſſary means of keeping us alive. And that is the firſt end of Eating, and as Men uſe not to take Phyſick for pleaſure, but remedy, ſo neither ſhould they eat.

Of Health.

27. But ſecondly, God hath been ſo bountiful as to provide not only for the Being, but the well-being of our Bodies, and therefore we are not tied to ſuch ſtrictneſs, that we may Eat no more than will juſt keep us from ſtarving, but we may alſo Eat whatſoever either for kind or quantity moſt tends to the health and welfare of them: Now that Eating which is agreeable to theſe ends, is within the bounds of Temperance, as on the contrary, whatſoever is contrary to them, is a tranſgreſſion againſt it; he therefore that ſets up to himſelf other ends of Eating, as either the pleaſing of his taſte, or, (what is yet worſe) the pampering of his Body, that he may the better ſerve his luſt, he directly thwarts and croſſes theſe ends of God; for he that hath thoſe aims doth that which is very contrary to health, yea, to life it ſelf, as appears by the many diſeaſes and untimely deaths which ſurfeiting and uncleanneſs daily bring on Men.

Rules of Temperance in Eating.

28. He therefore that will practiſe this Vertue of Temperance, muſt neither eat ſo much, nor of any ſuch ſorts of Meat (provided he can have other) as may be hurtful to his health: What the ſorts or quantities ſhall be, is impoſſible to ſet down, for that differs according to the ſeveral conſtitutions of Men, ſome Men may with Temperance eat a great deal, becauſe their ſtomachs require it; when another may be guilty of intemperance in eating but half ſo much, becauſe it is more than is uſeful to him. And ſo alſo for the ſort of Meat, it may be niceneſs and luxury for ſome to be curious in them, when yet ſome degree of it may be neceſſary to the infirmities of a weak ſtomach, which not out of wantonneſs, but diſeaſe, cannot eat the courſer Meats. But I think it may in general be ſaid, that to healthful Bodies the plaineſt Meats are generally the moſt wholſom, but every Man muſt in this be left to judge for himſelf; and that he may do it aright, he muſt be careful that he never ſuffer himſelf to be enſlaved to his Palate, for that will be ſure to ſatisfie it ſelf, whatever becomes of health or life.

Means of it.

29. To ſecure him the better, let him conſider, Firſt, how unreaſonable a thing it is that the whole Body ſhould be ſubject to this one Senſe of Taſting, that it muſt run all hazards only to pleaſe that. But it is yet much more ſo, that the Diviner part, the Soul, ſhould alſo be thus enſlaved; and yet thus it is in an intemperate Perſon, his very Soul muſt be ſacrificed to this brutiſh appetite; for the ſin of Intemperance, though it be acted by the Body, yet the Soul muſt ſhare in the Eternal Puniſhment of it. Secondly, Conſider how extreme ſhort and vaniſhing this pleaſure is, it is gone in a moment, but the pains that attend the exceſs of it are much more durable, and then ſurely it agrees not with that common Reaſon, wherewith, as Men, we are indued, to ſet our hearts upon it. But then in the third place, it agrees yet worſe with the temper of a Chriſtian, who ſhould have his heart ſo purified and refined with the expectation of thoſe higher and Spiritual Joys he looks for in another world, that he ſhould very much deſpiſe theſe groſs and brutiſh Pleaſures, which Beaſts are as capable of as we, and to them we may well be content to leave them, it being the higheſt their natures can reach to; but for us who have ſo much more excellent hopes, it is an intolerable ſhame that we ſhould account

count them as any part of our happineſs. Laſtly, The ſin of Gluttony is ſo great and dangerous, that Chriſt thought fit to give an eſpecial warning againſt it. *Take heed to your ſelves that your hearts be not overcharged with ſurfeiting,* &c. *Luke* 21. 34. And you know what was the end of the rich Glutton, *Luke* 16. He that had *fared deliciouſly every day,* at laſts wants a *drop of water to cool his tongue.* So much for the firſt ſort of Temperance, that of Eating.

SUNDAY VIII.

Of Temperance in Drinking, Falſe ends of Drinking, viz. *Good fellowſhip, putting away Cares,* &c.

Temperance in drinking. *Sect.* 1. THE ſecond is Temperance in Drinking: And the ends of Eating and drinking being much the ſame, I can give no other direct rules in this, than what were given in the former, to wit, that we drink neither of ſuch ſorts of Liquor, nor in ſuch quantities as may not agree with the right ends of Drinking, the preſerving our Lives and Healths: Only in this there will be need of putting in one Caution: For our underſtandings being in more danger to be hurt by drinking than meat; we muſt rather take care to keep that ſafe, and rather not drink what we might ſafely in reſpect of our Health, if it be in danger to diſtemper our Reaſon. This I ſay, becauſe it is poſſible ſome Mens Brains may be ſo weak that their heads cannot bear that ordinary quantity of Drink which would do their Bodies no harm. And whoever is of this temper muſt ſtrictly abſtain from that degree of drink, or that ſort of it which he finds hath that effect, yea, though it do in other reſpects appear not only ſafe but uſeful to his Health. For though we are to preſerve our Healths, yet we are not to do it by a ſin, as drunkenneſs moſt certainly is.

Falſe ends of drinking. 2. But alas! of thoſe multitudes of Drunkards we have in the world, this is the caſe but of very few, moſt of them going far beyond what their Health requires, yea, or can bear, even to the utter deſtruction thereof. And therefore it is plain, Men have ſet up to themſelves ſome other ends of drinking than thoſe allowable ones forementioned; it may not be amiſs a little to explain what they are, and withal to ſhew the unreaſonableneſs of them.

Good-fellowſhip. 3. The firſt, and moſt owned, is that which they call Good-fellowſhip; one Man drinks to keep another company at it. But I would ask ſuch a one, whether if that Man were drinking rank poiſon, he would pledge him for company; If he ſay he would not, I muſt tell him, that by the very ſame, nay, far greater reaſon, he is not to do this. For immoderate drinking is that very poiſon, perhaps it doth not always work death immediate (yet there want not many inſtances of its having done even that, very many have died in their drunken fit) but that the cuſtom of it does uſually bring Men to their ends, is paſt doubt; and therefore though the poiſon work ſlowly, yet it is ſtill poiſon. But however it doth at the preſent work that which a Wiſe Man would more abhor than death; it works madneſs, and frenzy, turns the Man into a Beaſt, by drowning that Reaſon which ſhould difference him from one. Certainly the effects of drink are ſuch, that had being drunk been firſt enjoyned as a puniſhment, we ſhould have thought him a more than ordinary Tyrant that had invented it.

Preſerving of kindneſs.

4. A ſecond end of drinking is ſaid to be the maintaining of friendſhip, and kindneſs amongſt Men. But this is ſtrangely unreaſonable, that Men ſhould do that towards the maintaining of friendſhip, which is really the greateſt miſchief that can be done to any Man. Did ever any think to befriend a man by helping to deſtroy his Eſtate, his Credit, his Life? Yet he that thus drinks with a Man, does this and much more; he ruines his Reaſon, yea, his Soul, and yet this muſt be called the way of preſerving of friendſhip. This is ſo ridiculous, that one would think none could own it, but when he were actually drunk. But beſides alas! experience ſhews us that this is fitter to beget quarrels than preſerve kindneſs, as the many drunken brawls we every day ſee, with the wounds, and ſometimes murders that accompany them, do witneſs.

Chearing the ſpirits.

5. A third end is ſaid to be the chearing of their ſpirits, making them merry and jolly. But ſure if the mirth be ſuch that Reaſon muſt be turned out of doors before it begin, it will be very little worth; one may ſay with *Solomon*, Eccleſ. 2. 2. *The laughter of ſuch fools is madneſs.* And ſure they that will be drunk, to put themſelves in this temper, muſt by the ſame reaſon be glad of a Frenzy, if they could but be ſure it would be of the merry ſort. But little do theſe merry folks think what ſadneſs they are all this while heaping up to themſelves, often in this world, when by ſome mad pranks they play in their jollity, they bring miſchief upon themſelves, but however certainly in another, where this mirth will be ſadly reckoned for.

Putting away cares.

6. A fourth end is ſaid to be the putting away of cares: but I ſhall ask what thoſe cares are? Be they ſuch as ſhould be put away? Perhaps they are ſome checks and remorſes of Conſcience, which muſt be thus charmed. And I doubt this hath proved too effectual with many to the laying them aſleep. But this is the wickedeſt folly in the world; for if thou thinkeſt not theſe checks to have ſome thing conſiderable in them, why do they trouble thee? But if thou do, it is impoſſible thou canſt hope this can long ſecure thee from them. Thou mayeſt thus ſtop their mouths for a while, but they will one day cry the louder for it. Suppoſe a Thief or a Murderer knew he were purſued to be brought to Juſtice, would he, think you, to put away the fear of being hanged, fall to drinking, and in the mean time take no care for his eſcape? Or would you not think him deſperately mad, if he did? Yet this is the very caſe here; Thy Conſcience tells thee of thy danger, that thou muſt ere long be brought before God's Judgment-ſeat; and is it not madneſs for thee, inſtead of endeavouring to get thy Pardon, to drink away the thought of thy danger? But in the ſecond place, ſuppoſe theſe cares be ſome worldly ones, and ſuch as are fit to be put away; then for ſhame do not ſo diſgrace thy Reaſon, thy Chriſtianity, as not to let them be as forcible to that end as a little drink. Thy Reaſon will tell thee it is in vain to care, where care will bring no advantage: And thy Chriſtianity will direct thee to one on whom thou mayeſt *ſafely caſt all thy cares, for he careth for thee*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. And therefore unleſs thou meaneſt to renounce being both a Man and a Chriſtian, never betake thee to this pitiful ſhift, to rid thee of thy cares. But beſides, this will not do the deed neither, for though it may at the preſent, whilſt thou art in the height of thy drunken fit, keep thee from the ſence of thy cares, yet when that is over, they will return again with greater violence; and, if thou haſt any Conſcience, bring a new care with them, even that which ariſeth from the guilt of ſo foul a ſin.

Paſſing away of time.

7. A fifth end is ſaid to be the paſſing away of Time. This, though it be as unreaſonable as any of the former, yet, by the way, it ſerves to re-

proach idleneſs, which is, it ſeems, ſo burthenſome a thing, that even this vileſt imployment is preferred before it. But this is in many a very falſe plea. For they often ſpend time at the pot, not only when they have nothing elſe to do, but even to the neglect of their moſt neceſſary buſineſs. However it is in all a moſt unreaſonable one, for there is no Man but he may find ſomewhat or other to employ himſelf in. If he have little worldly buſineſs of his own, he may yet do ſomewhat to the benefit of others; but however there is no Man but hath a Soul, and if he will look carefully to that, he need not complain for want of buſineſs; where there are ſo many corruptions to mortifie, ſo many inclinations to watch over, ſo many temptations (whereof this of drunkenneſs, is not the leaſt) to reſiſt; the Graces of God to improve and ſtir up, and former neglects of all theſe to lament, ſure there can never want ſufficient employment; for all theſe require time, and ſo men at their deaths find; for thoſe that have all their lives made it their buſineſs to drive away their time, would then give all the world to redeem it. And ſure where there is much leiſure from worldly affairs, God expects to have the more time thus imployed in Spiritual Exerciſes. But it is not likely thoſe meaner ſort of Perſons, to whom this Book is intended, will be of the number of thoſe that have much leiſure, and therefore I ſhall no further inſiſt on it, only I ſhall ſay this, that what degrees of leiſure they at any time have, it concerns them to imploy to the benefit of their Souls, and not to beſtow it to the ruine of them as they do, who ſpend it in drinking.

Preventing reproach.

8. A ſixth end is ſaid to be the preventing of that reproach which is by the world caſt on thoſe that will in this be ſtricter than their neighbours. But in anſwer to this, I ſhall firſt ask, what is the harm of ſuch reproach? Sure it cannot equal the leaſt of thoſe miſchiefs drunkenneſs betrays us to. Nay, if we will take our Saviour's word, it is a happineſs. *Bleſſed,* ſaith he, *are ye when men ſhall revile you, and ſay all manner of evil againſt you for my ſake,* Mat. 5. 11. And S. *Peter* tells us, 1 *Pet.* 4. 14. *If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt, happy are ye:* And ſure to be reproached for obedience to any command of Chriſt's, is to be reproached for his Name. Secondly, Let it be remembred that at our Baptiſm we ſolemnly renounced the World; and ſhall we now ſo far conſider it, as for a few ſcoffs of it to run our ſelves on all the temporal evils beforementioned; and which is much worſe, the Wrath of God and Eternal Deſtruction? But Thirdly, If you fear reproach, why do ye do that which will bring reproach upon you from all wiſe and good Men, whoſe opinion alone is to be regarded; And it is certain, drinking is the way to bring it on you from all ſuch. And to comfort thy ſelf againſt that, by thinking thou art ſtill applauded by the fooliſh and worſt ſort of Men, is as if all the mad-men in the world ſhould agree to count themſelves the only ſober Perſons, and all others mad, which yet ſure will never make them the leſs mad, nor others the leſs ſober. Laſtly, Conſider the heavy doom Chriſt hath pronounc'd on thoſe that are aſhamed of him, and ſo are all thoſe that for fear of reproach ſhall ſhrink from their obedience to him, *Matth.* 8. 38. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of the Father with the holy Angels.* There is none but will at that day deſire to be owned by Chriſt: But whoever will not here own him, that is, cleave faſt to his commands, notwithſtanding all the ſcorns, nay, perſecutions of the world, ſhall then certainly be caſt off by him. And he that will adventure thus to maintain his credit among a company of Fools and Mad-men, deſerves well

to have it befal him: But after all this, it is not ſure that even theſe will deſpiſe thee for thy ſobriety, it is poſſible they may ſeem to do ſo to fright thee out of it; but if their hearts were ſearched, it would be found they do even againſt their wills bear a ſecret reverence to ſober Perſons, and none fall more often under their ſcorn and deſpiſing, than thoſe that run with them to the ſame exceſs of riot; for even he that ſticks not to be drunk himſelf, will yet laugh at another that he ſees ſo.

Pleaſure of the drink.

9. There is a ſeventh end, which though every Man thinks too baſe to own, yet it is too plain it prevails with many; and that is the bare pleaſure of the drink: But to theſe I confeſs it will not be fit to ſay much, for he that is come to this lamentable degree of ſottiſhneſs, is not like to receive benefit by any thing that can be ſaid: Yet let me tell even this Man, that he of all others hath the moſt means of diſcerning his fault; for this being ſuch a ground of drinking as no body will own, he is condemned of himſelf; yea, and all his fellow-drunkards too; for their denying it, is a plain ſign they acknowledge it a moſt abominable thing. And if *Eſau* were called a profane perſon, *Heb.* 12. 6. for *ſelling but his birth-right for a meſs of pottage*, and that too when he had the neceſſity of hunger upon him; what name of reproach can be bad enough for him who ſells his Health, his Reaſon, his God, his Soul for a cup of drink, and that when he is ſo far from needing it, that perhaps he hath already more than he can keep? I ſhall ſay no more to this ſort of Perſons, but let me warn all thoſe that go on in this ſin on any of the former grounds, that a little time will bring them even to this which they profeſs to loath; it being daily ſeen that thoſe which firſt were drawn into the ſin for the love of the company, at laſt continue in it for love of the drink.

Bargaining.

10. I can think but of one end more, that is, that of Bargaining. Men ſay it is neceſſary for them to drink in this one reſpect of trading with their Neighbours, Bargains being moſt conveniently to be ſtruck up at ſuch meetings. But this is yet a worſe end than all the reſt, for the bottom of it is an aim of cheating and defrauding others; we think when Men are in drink we ſhall the better be able to over-reach them; and ſo this adds the ſin of cozenage and defrauding to that of drunkenneſs. Now that this is indeed the intent, is manifeſt, for if it were only the diſpatch of Bargains were aimed at, we ſhould chuſe to take Men with their wits about them: Therefore the taking them when drink hath diſtempered them, can be for nothing but to make advantage of them. Yet this often proves a great folly as well as a ſin; for he that drinks with another in hope to over-reach him, doth many times prove the weaker-brain'd, and becomes drunk firſt, and then he gives the other that opportunity of cheating him, which he deſigned for the cheating of the other. Now this end of drinking is ſo far from becoming an excuſe, that it is a huge heightning of the ſin; for if we may not drink intemperately upon any occaſion, much leſs upon ſo wicked an one as is the cozening and defrauding of our brethren.

Degrees of this ſin.

11. I ſuppoſe I have now ſhewed you the unreaſonableneſs of thoſe Motives, which are ordinarily brought in excuſe of this ſin. I am yet further to tell you, that it is not only that huge degree of drunkenneſs which makes Men able neither to go nor ſpeak, which is to be lookt on as a ſin, but all lower degrees, which do at all work upon the underſtanding, whether by dulling it and making it leſs fit for any imployment, or by making it too light and airy, apt to apiſh and ridiculous mirth, or what is worſe, by inflaming Men into rage and fury. Theſe or whatever elſe make any change in the Man, are to be reckoned in to this ſin of drunkenneſs;

Nay, further, the drinking beyond the natural ends of drinking, that is, beyond moderate refreſhment, is a ſin, though by the ſtrength of a Man's Brain it makes not the leaſt change in him, and therefore thoſe that are not actually drunk, yet can ſpend whole days, or any conſiderable part of them in drinking, are ſo far from being innocent, that that greater woe belongs to them which is pronounced, *Iſa.* 5. 22. againſt thoſe that are mighty to drink. For though ſuch a Man may make a ſhift to preſerve his wits, yet that wit ſerves him to very little purpoſe, when his employment is ſtill but the ſame with him that is the moſt ſottiſhly drunk, that is to pour down drink.

The great guilt of the ſtrong drinkers.

12. Nay, This Man is guilty of the greateſt waſte; Firſt, of the good creatures of God; That drink which is by God's Providence intended for the refreſhing and relieving of us, is abuſed and miſ-ſpent when it is drunk beyond that meaſure which thoſe ends require; and ſure there is not the meaneſt of theſe creatures we enjoy, but the abuſe of them ſhall one day be accounted for, and he that drinks longeſt hath the moſt of that guilt. But in the ſecond place, this is a waſte of that which is much more precious, our time, which is allowed us by God to work out our Salvation in, and muſt be ſtrictly reckoned for, and therefore ought every minute of it to be moſt thriftily husbanded to that end in actions of good life; but when it is thus laid out, it tends to the direct contrary, even the working out our damnation. Beſides, he that thus drinks, though he eſcape being drunk himſelf, he is yet guilty of all the drunkenneſs that any of his company fall under; for he gives them encouragement to drink on by his Example, eſpecially if he be one of any Authority; but if he be one whoſe company the reſt are fond of, his company is then a certain enſnaring of them, for then they will drink too, rather than loſe him. There is yet a greater fault that many of theſe ſtronger brain'd drinkers are guilty of, that is, the ſetting themſelves purpoſely to make others drunk, playing, as it were, a prize at it, and counting it matter of triumph and victory to ſee others fall before them: This is a moſt horrible wickedneſs, it is the making our ſelves the Devil's Factors, endeavouring all we can to draw our poor brethren into eternal miſery, by betraying them to ſo grievous a ſin; and therefore it may well be reckoned as the higheſt ſtep of this vice of drinking, as having in it the ſin of miſchieving others added to the exceſs in our ſelves. And though it be lookt upon in the world as a matter only of jeſt and merriment to make others drunk, that we may ſport our ſelves with their ridiculous behaviour, yet that mirth will have a ſad concluſion, there being a woe expreſly threatned by God to this very ſin, *Hab.* 2. 15. *Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteſt thy bottle to him, and makeſt him drunk, that thou mayeſt look on their nakedneſs:* And ſure he buys his idle paſtime very dear, that takes it with ſuch a Wo attending it.

The great miſchiefs of this ſin.

13. I have now gone through the ſeveral motives to, and degrees of this ſin of drunkenneſs, wherein I have been the more particular, becauſe it is a ſin ſo ſtrangely reigning amongſt us: No Condition, no Age, or ſcarce Sex free from it, to the great diſhonour of God, reproach of Chriſtianity, and ruine not only of our own Souls hereafter, but even of all our preſent advantages and happineſs in this life; there being no ſin which betrays each ſingle committer to more miſchiefs in his underſtanding, his health, his credit, his eſtate, than this one doth. And we have reaſon to belive this ſin is one of thoſe common crying guilts which have long lain heavy upon this Nation, and pulled down thoſe many ſad judgments we have groaned under.

14. There-

Exhortation to forſake it.

14. Therefore, Chriſtian Reader, let me now intreat, nay, conjure thee by all that tenderneſs and love thou oughteſt to have to the honour of God, the credit of thy Chriſtian Profeſſion, Eternal Welfare of thine own Soul, the proſperity of the Church and Nation, whereof thou art a member; Nay, by that love which certainly thou haſt to thy own temporal Welfare, to think ſadly of what hath been ſpoken; and then judge, whether there be any pleaſure in this ſin which can be any tolerable recompence for all thoſe miſchiefs it brings with it. I am confident no Man in his wits can think there is; and if there be not, then be aſhamed to be any longer that fool, which ſhall make ſo wretched a Bargain, but begin at this inſtant a firm and a faithful reſolution, never once more to be guilty of this ſwiniſh ſin, how often ſoever thou haſt heretofore fallen into it, and in the fear of God betake thee to a ſtrict Temperance, which when thou haſt done thou wilt find thou haſt made, not only a gainful but a pleaſant exchange; for there is no Man that hath tried both courſes, but his own heart will tell him there is infinitely more preſent comfort and pleaſure in Sobriety and Temperance, than ever all his drunken revellings afforded him.

The difficulties of doing ſo conſidered.

Seeming neceſſity of drink.

15. The main difficulty is the firſt breaking off the cuſtom, and that ariſes partly from our ſelves; partly from others. That from our ſelves may be of two ſorts; the firſt is, when by the habit of drinking, we have brought ſuch falſe thirſts upon our ſelves, that our Bodies ſeem to require it, and this wants nothing but a little patience to overcome. Do but refrain ſome few days, and it will afterwards grow eaſie; for the hardneſs ariſing only from cuſtom, the breaking off that does the buſineſs. If thou ſay, it is very uneaſie to do ſo, conſider, whether if thou hadſt ſome diſeaſe which would certainly kill thee if thou didſt not for ſome little time refrain immoderate Drinking, thou wouldſt not rather forbear than die. If thou wouldſt not, thou art ſo bruitiſh a ſot that it is in vain to perſwade thee; but if thou hadſt, then conſider how unreaſonable it is for thee not to do it in this caſe alſo; the habit of Drinking may well paſs for a mortal diſeaſe, it proves ſo very often to the Body, but will moſt certainly to the Soul; and therefore it is madneſs to ſtick at that uneaſineſs in the cure of this, which thou wouldeſt ſubmit to in a leſs danger. Set therefore but a reſolute purpoſe to endure that little trouble for a ſmall time, and this firſt difficulty is conquer'd, for after thou haſt a while refrained, it will be perfectly eaſie to do ſo ſtill.

Want of imployment.

16. The ſecond difficulty is that of ſpending the time, which thoſe that have made Drinking their trade and buſineſs, know ſcarce how to diſpoſe of. But the very naming of this difficulty directs to the cure; get thee ſome buſineſs, ſomewhat to employ thy ſelf in, which, as I have already ſhewed, will be eaſily found by all ſorts of perſons; but thoſe meaner to whom I now write, can ſure never want it ready at hand, they being generally ſuch as are to be maintained by their labour, and therefore to them I need only give this advice, to be diligent in that buſineſs they have, to follow that cloſe as they ought; and they will have little occaſion to ſeek out this way of ſpending their time.

Perſwaſions and reproaches of men.

17. There is another ſort of difficulty, which I told you ariſes from others, and that is either from their perſwaſions or reproaches. It is very likely, if thy old companions ſee thee begin to fall off, they will ſet hard to thee, to bring thee back to thy old courſe, they will urge to thee the unkindneſs of forſaking the company of thy friends, the ſadneſs of renouncing all that mirth and jollity, which good fellows (as they call them)

enjoy, and if thou canſt not thus be won, they will affright thee with the reproach of the world, and ſo try if they can mock thee out of thy ſobriety.

The means of reſiſting them.

18. The way to overcome this difficulty is to foreſee it: Therefore when thou firſt entreſt on thy courſe of Temperance, thou art to make account thou ſhalt meet with theſe (perhaps many other) Temptations, and that thou mayeſt make a right judgment, whether they be worthy to prevail with thee, take them before-hand and weigh them, conſider whether that falſe kindneſs that is maintained among men by drinking, be worthy to be compared with that real and everlaſting kindneſs of God, which is loſt by it; whether that fooliſh, vain mirth bear any weight with the preſent joys of a good Conſcience here, or with thoſe greater of Heaven hereafter. Laſtly, Whether the unjuſt reproach of wicked men, the ſhame of the world, be ſo terrible, as the juſt reproof of thine own Conſcience at the preſent, and that Eternal Confuſion of face that ſhall befal all thoſe that go on in this ſin, at the laſt day; weigh all theſe, I ſay, I need not ſay in the balance of the Sanctuary, but even in the ſcales of common Reaſon, and ſure thou wilt be forced to pronounce, that the motives to Temperance infinitely outweigh thoſe againſt it. When thou haſt thus adviſedly judged, then fix thy reſolutions accordingly; and when ever any of theſe Temptations come to ſtagger thee, remember thou haſt formerly weighed them, knoweſt the juſt value of them, and that they are a moſt unworthy price for thoſe precious advantages thou muſt give in exchange for them. And therefore hold faſt thy reſolution, and with indignation reject all motions to the contrary.

Weigh the advantages with the hurt.

Reject the temptation at the very beginning.

19. But be ſure, thou thus reject them at their very firſt tender, and do not yield in the leaſt degree; for if once thou giveſt ground, thou art loſt, the ſin will by little and little prevail upon thee. Thus we ſee many, who have profeſſed to be reſolved upon great Temperance, yet for want of this care, have adventured into the company of good-fellows; when they have been there, they have at the firſt been over-intreated to take a cup, after that another, till at laſt they have taken their rounds as freely as any of them, and in that floud of drink drowned all their ſober reſolutions. Therefore whoever thou art, that doſt really deſire to forſake the ſin, take care to avoid the occaſions and beginnings of it; to which end it will be good openly to declare and own thy purpoſes of ſobriety, that ſo thou mayeſt diſcourage men from aſſaulting thee. But if either thou art aſhamed to own it, or ſeemeſt to be ſo, they will quickly make uſe of that ſhame to bring thee to break it.

The ſecurity of doing ſo.

20. If thou be thus wary to keep thee from the firſt beginnings, thou art then ſure never to be overtaken with this ſin; for it is like the keeping the outworks of a beſieged City, which, ſo long as they are ſtoutly defended there is no danger; but if they be either ſurpriſed or yielded, the City cannot long hold out. The advice therefore of the Wiſe Man is very agreeable to this matter, *Eccluſ.* 19.1. *He that deſpiſeth ſmall things, ſhall periſh by little and little.* But becauſe, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſaith, *Pſalm* 127.1. *Except the Lord keep the City, the watchman waketh but in vain:* Therefore to this guard of thy ſelf add thy moſt earneſt prayers to God, that he will alſo watch over thee, and by the ſtrength of his Grace enable thee to reſiſt all Temptations to this ſin.

The efficacy of theſe means if not hindred by love of the ſin.

21. If thou do in the ſincerity of thy heart uſe theſe means, there is no doubt but thou wilt be able to overcome this vice, how long ſoever thou haſt been accuſtomed to it; therefore if thou doſt ſtill remain under the power

of it, never excuſe thy ſelf by the impoſſibility of the task, but rather accuſe the falſeneſs of thy own heart, that hath ſtill ſuch a love to this ſin, that thou wilt not ſet roundly to the means of ſubduing it.

That love makes a man loth to believe it dangerous.

22. Perhaps the great commonneſs of the ſin and thy particular cuſtom of it may have made it ſo much thy familiar, thy boſom acquaintance, that thou art loth to entertain hard thoughts of it, very unwilling thou art to think that it means thee any hurt, and therefore art apt to ſpeak peace to thy ſelf, to hope that either this is no ſin, or at moſt but a frailty, ſuch as will not bar thee out of Heaven: but deceive not thy ſelf, for thou mayeſt as well ſay there is no Heaven, as that drunkenneſs ſhall not keep thee thence; I am ſure the ſame Word of God which tells us there is ſuch a place of Happineſs, tells us alſo that Drunkards are of the number of thoſe that ſhall not inherit it, 1 *Cor.* 6. 10. And again, *Gal.* 5. 21. Drunkenneſs is reckoned among thoſe works of the fleſh, which they that do *ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* And indeed had not theſe plain Texts yet mere Reaſon would tell us the ſame, that that is a place of infinite Purity, ſuch as fleſh and blood, till it be refined and purified, is not capable of, as the Apoſtle tells us, 1 *Cor.* 15. 53. and if, as we are mere men, we are too groſs and impure for it, we muſt ſure be more ſo when we have changed our ſelves into Swine, the fouleſt of Beaſts, we are then prepared for the Devils to enter into, as they did into the herd, *Mark* 5. 13. and that not only ſome one or two, but a Legion; a troop and multitude of them. And of this we daily ſee examples, for where this ſin of Drunkenneſs hath taken poſſeſſion, it uſually comes as an harbinger to abundance of others; each act of Drunkenneſs prepares a Man not only for another of the ſame ſin but of others: Luſt and Rage, and all brutiſh appetites are then let looſe, and ſo a Man brings himſelf under that curſe which was the ſaddeſt *David* knew how to foretel to any, *Pſal.* 63. 28. *The falling from one wickedneſs to another.* If all this be not enough to affright thee out of this drunken fit, thou mayeſt ſtill wallow in thy vomit, continue in this ſottiſh, ſenceleſs condition, till the flames of Hell rowſe thee, and then thou wilt by ſad experience find what now thou wilt not believe, *That the end of thoſe things*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 6. 21. *is death.* God in his infinite mercy timely awake the hearts of all that are in this ſin, that by a timely forſaking it they may *fly from the wrath to come.* I have now done with this ſecond part of Temperance, concerning Drinking.

SUNDAY IX.

Temperance in Sleep: the rule of it, &c. *Miſchiefs of ſloth, of Recreations, Cautions to be obſerved in them; of Apparel*, &c.

Sleep.

Sect. 1. THE Third part of TEMPERANCE concerns SLEEP; And Temperance in that alſo muſt be meaſured by the end for which Sleep was ordained by God, which was only the refreſhing and ſupporting of our frail Bodies, which being of ſuch a Temper that continual labour and toil tires and wearies them out, Sleep comes as a medicine to that wearineſs, as a repairer of that decay, that ſo we may be enabled to ſuch labours as the Duties of Religion or works of our Calling require of us. Sleep was intended to make us more profitable, not more idle; as we give reſt to our Beaſts, not that we are pleaſed with their doing nothing, but that they may do us the better ſervice.

The Rule of Temperance therein.

2. By this therefore you may judge what is temperate ſleeping; to wit, that which tends to the refreſhing and making us more lively and fit for action, and to that end a moderate degree ſerves beſt. It will be impoſſible to ſet down juſt how many hours is that moderate degree, becauſe, as in Eating, ſo in ſleep, ſome conſtitutions require more than others: Every Man's own experience muſt in this judge for him, but then let him judge uprightly, and not conſult with his ſloth in the caſe; for that will ſtill, with *Solomon*'s ſluggard, cry, *A little more ſleep, a little more ſlumber, a little more folding of the hands to ſleep, Prov.* 24. 23. but take only ſo much as he really finds to tend to the end forementioned.

The many Sins that follow the tranſgreſſion of it.

3. He that doth not thus limit himſelf falls into ſeveral ſins under this general one of ſloth: As firſt, he waſtes his time, that precious talent which was committed to him by God to improve, which he that ſleeps away, doth like him in the Goſpel, *Matth.* 25. 18. *Hides it in the earth,* when he ſhould be trading with it; and you know what was the doom of that unprofitable ſervant, verſe 30. *Caſt ye him into outer darkneſs:* He that gives himſelf to darkneſs of ſleep here, ſhall there have darkneſs without ſleep, but with *weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.* Secondly, He injures his body: Immoderate ſleep fills that full of diſeaſes, makes it a very ſink of humours, as daily experience ſhews us. Thirdly, He injures his Soul alſo, and that not only in robbing it of the ſervice of the Body, but in dulling its proper faculties, making them uſeleſs and unfit for thoſe employments to which God hath deſigned them; of all which ill husbandry the poor Soul muſt one day give account. Nay, laſtly, he affronts and deſpiſes God himſelf in it, by croſſing the very end of his Creation, which was to ſerve God in an active obedience; but he that ſleeps away his life, directly thwarts and contradicts that, and when God ſaith, *Man is born to labour,* his practice ſaith the direct contrary, that Man is born to reſt. Take heed therefore of giving thy ſelf to immoderate ſleep, which is the committing of ſo many ſins in one.

Other miſchiefs of ſloth.

4. But beſides the ſin of it, it is alſo very hurtful in other reſpects, it is the ſure bane of thy outward Eſtate, wherein the ſluggiſh perſon ſhall never thrive; according to that obſervation of the Wiſe Man, *Prov.* 23. 21. *Drowſineſs ſhall cover a man with rags*; that is, the ſlothful man ſhall want convenient clothing; nay, indeed it can ſcarce be ſaid, that the ſluggard lives. Sleep you know is a kind of death, and he that gives himſelf up to it, what doth he but die before his time? Therefore if untimely death be to be lookt upon as a curſe, it muſt needs be a ſtrange folly to chuſe that from our own ſloth which we dread ſo much from God's hand.

Temperance in Recreation.

5. The fourth part of Temperance concerns Recreations, which are ſometimes neceſſary both to the Body and the Mind of a Man, neither of them being able to endure a conſtant toil without ſomewhat of refreſhment between; and therefore there is a very lawful uſe of them; but to make it ſo, it will be neceſſary to obſerve theſe Cautions.

Cautions to be obſerved in them.

6. Firſt. We muſt take care that the kind of them be lawful, that they be ſuch as have nothing of ſin in them; We muſt not to recreate our ſelves, do any thing which is diſhonourable to God, or injurious to our Neighbour, as they do who make prophane or filthy backbiting diſcourſe their recreation. Secondly, We muſt take care that we uſe it with moderation: And to do ſo, we muſt firſt be ſure not to ſpend too much time upon it, but remember that the end of Recreation is to fit us for buſineſs, not to be it ſelf a buſineſs to us. Secondly, We muſt not be too vehement and earneſt in it, nor ſet our hearts too much upon it, for that will both enſnare us to

the uſing too much of it, and it will divert and take off our minds from our more neceſſary imployments: Like School-boys, who after a play-time, know not how to ſet themſelves to their Books again. Laſtly, We muſt not ſet up to our ſelves any other end of Recreations but that lawful one, of giving us moderate refreſhment.

Undue ends of Sports.

7. As firſt, We are not to uſe Sports only to paſs away our time, which we ought to ſtudy how to redeem, not fling away; and when it is remembred how great a work we have here to do, the *making our calling and election ſure*, the ſecuring our title to Heaven hereafter, and how uncertain we are what time ſhall be allowed us for that purpoſe; it will appear, our time is that which of all other things we ought moſt induſtriouſly to improve. And therefore ſure we have little need to contrive ways of driving that away which flies ſo faſt of it ſelf, and is ſo impoſſible to recover. Let them that can ſpend whole Days and Nights at Cards and Dice, and idle paſtimes conſider this, and withal, whether they ever beſtowed a quarter of that time towards that great buſineſs of their lives, for which all their time was given them, and then think what a woful reckoning they are like to make, when they come at laſt to account for that precious treaſure of their time. Secondly, We muſt not let our Covetouſneſs have any thing to do in our Recreations; if we play at any Game, let the end of our doing it be meerly to recreate our ſelves, not to win Money, and to that purpoſe be ſure never to play for any conſiderable matter; for if thou do, thou wilt bring thy ſelf into two dangers, the one of Covetouſneſs, and a greedy deſire of winning, the other of Rage and Anger at thy ill fortune, if thou happen to loſe: Both which will be apt to draw thee into other ſins beſides themſelves. Covetouſneſs will tempt thee to cheat and cozen in Gaming, and Anger to ſwearing and curſing, as common experience ſhews us too often. If thou find thy ſelf apt to fall into either of theſe in thy Gaming, thou muſt either take ſome courſe to ſecure thy ſelf againſt them, or thou muſt not permit thy ſelf to play at all: For though moderate play be in it ſelf not unlawful, yet if it be the occaſion of ſin, it is ſo to thee, and therefore muſt not be ventured on. For if Chriſt commands us ſo ſtrictly to avoid Temptations, that if our very Eyes or hands offend us (that is, prove ſnares to us) we muſt rather part with them, than to be drawn to ſin by them: How much rather muſt we part with any of theſe unneceſſary Sports, than run the hazard of offending God by them? He that ſo plays, lays his Soul to ſtake, which is too great a prize to be played away. Beſides, He loſes all the recreation and ſport he pretends to aim at, and inſtead of that ſets himſelf to a greater toil than any of thoſe labours are he was to eaſe by it. For ſure the deſires and fears of the Covetous, the impatience and rage of the Angry Man are more real pains than any the moſt laborious work can be.

Temperance in Apparel.

Apparel deſigned for covering of ſhame.

8. The laſt part of Temperance is that of APPAREL, which we are again to meaſure by the agreeableneſs to the ends for which clothng ſhould be uſed. Thoſe are eſpecially theſe three: Firſt the hiding of nakedneſs. This was the firſt occaſion of Apparel, as you may read, *Gen.* 3. 21. and was the effect of the firſt ſin; and therefore when we remember the original of cloths, we have ſo little reaſon to be proud of them, that on the contrary we have cauſe to be humbled and aſhamed, as having loſt that innocency which was a much greater ornament than any the moſt glorious Apparel can be. From this end of clothing we are likewiſe engaged to have our Apparel modeſt, ſuch as may anſwer this end of covering our ſhame: And therefore all immodeſt faſhions of Apparel, which

may either argue the wantonneſs of the wearer, or provoke that of the beholder, are to be avoided.

Fencing from cold.

9. A ſecond end of Apparel, is the fencing the Body from cold, thereby to preſerve the health thereof: and this end we muſt likewiſe obſerve in our clothing; we muſt wear ſuch kind of habits, as may keep us in that convenient warmth, which is neceſſary to our healths. And this is tranſgreſt, when out of the vanity of being in every fantaſtick faſhion, we put our ſelves in ſuch clothing as either will not defend us from cold, or is ſome other way ſo uneaſie, that it is rather a hurt than a benefit to our Bodies to be ſo clad. This is a moſt ridiculous folly, and yet that which People that take a pride in their clothes are uſually guilty of.

Diſtinction of Perſons.

10. A third end of Apparel is the diſtinguiſhing or differencing of perſons, and that firſt, in reſpect of Sex; ſecondly, in reſpect of Qualities. Firſt, Clothes are to make difference of Sex; this hath been obſerved by all Nations, the habits of Men and Women have always been divers. And God himſelf expreſly provided for it among the *Jews*, by commanding that the Man ſhould not wear the Apparel of the Woman, nor the Woman of the Man. But then ſecondly, There is alſo a diſtinction of qualities to be obſerved in Apparel, God hath placed ſome in a higher condition than others, and in proportion to their condition it befits their clothing to be. Gorgeous Apparel, our Saviour tells us, *is for Kings Courts, Luke* 7. 25. Now this end of Apparel ſhould alſo be obſerved. Men and Women ſhould content themſelves with that ſort of clothing which agrees to their Sex and condition, not ſtriving to exceed, and equal that of a higher rank, nor yet making it matter of envy, among thoſe of their own eſtate, vying who ſhall be fineſt: but let every Man clothe himſelf in ſuch ſober attire as befits his place and calling, and not think himſelf diſparaged, if another of his neighbours have better than he.

11. And let all remember that clothes are things which add no true worth to any, and therefore it is an intolerable vanity to ſpend any conſiderable part either of their Thoughts, Time or Wealth upon them, or to value themſelves ever the more for them, or deſpiſe their poor brethren that want them. But if they deſire to adorn themſelves, let it be as S. *Peter* adviſeth the Women of his time, 1 *Pet.*3.4. *In the hidden man of the heart, even the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit.* Let them cloth themſelves as richly as is poſſible with all Chriſtian Vertues, and that is the raiment that will ſet them out lovely in God's eyes, yea, and in Mens too, who unleſs they be Fools and Idiots, will more value thee for being good than fine; and ſure one plain Coat thou putteſt upon a poor Man's back will better become thee, than twenty rich ones thou ſhalt put upon thine own.

Too much ſparing, a fault as well as exceſs.

12. I have now gone through the ſeveral parts of Temperance, I ſhall now in concluſion add this general caution, that though in all theſe particulars I have taken notice only of the one fault of exceſs, yet it is poſſible there may be one on the other hand: Men may deny their Bodies that which they neceſſarily require to their ſupport, and well-being. This is, I believe, a fault not ſo common as the other, yet we ſometimes ſee ſome very niggardly Perſons, that are guilty of it, that cannot find in their hearts to borrow ſo much from their Cheſts as may fill their Bellies, or cloth their Backs, and that are ſo intent upon the World, ſo moiling, and drudging in it, that they cannot afford themſelves that competent time of Sleep, or Recreation, that is neceſſary. If any that hath read the former part of this Diſcourſe be of this temper, let him not comfort him-

ſelf, that he is not guilty of thoſe exceſſes there complained of, and therefore conclude himſelf a good Chriſtian, becauſe he is not intemperate; for whoever is this covetous Creature, his abſtaining ſhall not be counted to him as the vertue of Temperance; for it is not the love of Temperance, but wealth that makes him refrain; and that is ſo far from being praiſe-worthy, that it is that great ſin which the Apoſtle tells us, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. *is the root of all evil*; ſuch a Man's body will one day riſe in judgment againſt him, for defrauding it of its due portion, thoſe moderate refreſhments and comforts which God hath allowed it. This is an Idolatry beyond that of offering the children to *Moloch*, *Lev.* 20. 3. they offered but their children but this covetous wretch ſacrifices himſelf to his god Mammon, whilſt he often deſtroys his Health, his Life, yea, finally his Soul too, to ſave his Purſe. I have now done with the ſecond head of Duty, that to our ſelves, contained by the Apoſtle under the word Soberly.

SUNDAY X.

Of duties to our Neighbour. Of Juſtice, Negative, Poſitive. Of the ſin of Murther, of the hainouſneſs of it, the puniſhments of it, and the ſtrange diſcoveries thereof. Of Maiming, &c.

Duty to our Neighbour.

Sect. 1. I Come now to the third part of Duties, thoſe to our NEIGHBOUR, which are by the Apoſtle ſumm'd up in groſs in the word [Righteouſneſs] by which is meant not only bare Juſtice, but all kind of Charity alſo, for that is now by the law of Chriſt become a debt to our Neighbour, and it is a piece of unrighteouſneſs to defraud him of it. I ſhall therefore build all the particular duties we owe to our Neighbour, on thoſe two general ones, Juſtice and Charity.

Juſtice.

2. I begin with JUSTICE, whereof there are two parts, the one Negative, the other Poſitive: The Negative Juſtice is to do no wrong, or injury to any. The Poſitive Juſtice is to do right to all; that is, to yield them whatſoever appertains or is due unto them. I ſhall firſt ſpeak of the Negative Juſtice, the not injuring or wronging any. Now becauſe a Man is capable of receiving wrong in ſeveral reſpects; this firſt part of Juſtice extends it ſelf into ſeveral branches, anſwerable to thoſe capacities of injury. A Man may be injured either in his Soul, his Body, his Poſſeſſions, or Credit; and therefore this duty of Negative Juſtice lays a reſtraint on us in every of theſe: That we do no wrong to any Man in reſpect either of his Soul, his Body, his Poſſeſſions, or his Credit.

Negative.

To the Soul.

3. Firſt this Juſtice ties us to do no hurt to his Soul; and here my firſt work muſt be to examine what harm it is that the Soul can receive: it is, we know, an inviſible ſubſtance which we cannot reach with our eye, much leſs with our ſwords and weapons, yet for all that it is capable of being hurt and wounded; and that even to death.

In the natural ſence.

4. Now the Soul may be conſidered either in a Natural or Spiritual ſence; in the Natural it ſignifies that which we uſually call the Mind of a Man, and this we all know, may be wounded with grief or ſadneſs, as *Solomon* ſaith, *Prov.* 15. 13. *By ſorrow of heart the Spirit is broken.* Therefore whoever doth cauſleſly afflict or grieve his Neighbour, he tranſgreſſes this part of juſtice, and hurts and wrongs his Soul. This ſort of injury malicious and ſpiteful Men are very often guilty of; they will do things, by which themſelves reap no good, nay, often much harm, only that they may vex and grieve another; this is a moſt ſavage, inhumane humour,

thus to take pleaſure in the ſadneſs and afflictions of others; and whoever harbours it in his heart, may truly be ſaid to be poſſeſt with a Devil, for it is the nature only of thoſe accurſed ſpirits to delight in the miſeries of Men; and till that be caſt out, they are fit only to dwell as the poſſeſt perſon did, *Mark* 5. 2. *among Graves and Tombs*, where there are none capable of receiving affliction by them.

In the ſpiritual.

5. But the Soul may be conſidered alſo in the Spiritual ſence, and ſo it ſignifies that immortal part of us which muſt live Eternally, either in bliſs or woe in another world. and the Soul thus underſtood is capable of two ſorts of harm: Firſt, That of Sin: Secondly, That of Puniſhment; the latter whereof is certainly the conſequent of the former; and therefore though God be the inflicter of Puniſhment, yet ſince it is but the effect of Sin, we may juſtly reckon, that he that draws a Man to ſin, is likewiſe the betrayer of him to puniſhment, as he that gives a Man a mortal wound is the cauſe of his death; therefore under the evil of ſin both are contained, ſo that I need ſpeak only of that.

Drawing to ſin the greateſt injury.

6. And ſure there cannot be a higher ſort of wrong, than the bringing this great evil upon the Soul. Sin is the diſeaſe and wound of the Soul, as being the direct contrary to Grace; which is the health and ſoundneſs of it: Now this wound we give to every Soul, whom we do by any means whatſoever draw into ſin.

Direct means of it.

7. The ways of doing that are divers, I ſhall mention ſome of them, whereof though ſome are more direct than others, yet all tend to the ſame end. Of the more direct ones there is, firſt, the commanding of Sin, that is, when a Perſon that hath power over another ſhall require him to do ſomething which is unlawful; an example of this we have in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s commanding the worſhip of the golden Image, *Dan.* 3. 4. and his copy is imitated by any Parent or Maſter, who ſhall require of his Child or Servant to do any unlawful act. Secondly, There is counſelling of ſin, when Men advice and perſwade others to any wickedneſs: Thus *Job*'s Wife counſelled her Husband to curſe God, *Job* 2. 7. And *Achitophel* adviſed *Abſalom* to go in to his Father's Concubines, 2 *Sam.* 16. 21. Thirdly, There is enticing and alluring to ſin, by ſetting before Men the pleaſures or profits they ſhall reap by it. Of this ſort of enticement *Solomon* gives warning, *Prov.* 1. 10. *My ſon, if ſinners entice thee, conſent thou not; if they ſay, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without a cauſe,*&c. and Verſe the 13. you may ſee what is the bait, by which they ſeek to allure them, *We ſhall find all precious ſubſtance; we ſhall fill our houſes with ſpoil. Caſt in thy lot among us, let us all have one Purſe.* Fourthly, There is aſſiſtance in ſin; that is, when Men aid and help others either in contriving or acting a ſin. Thus *Jonadab* helpt *Amnon* in plotting the Raviſhing of his Siſter, 2 *Sam.* 13. All theſe are direct means of bringing this great evil of ſin upon our brethren.

Indirect.

8. There are alſo others, which though they ſeem more indirect, may yet be as effectual towards that ill end, as firſt, example in ſin; he that ſets others an ill pattern, does his part to make them imitate it, and too often it hath that effect; there being generally nothing more forcible to bring Men into any ſinful practice, than the ſeeing it uſed by others, as might be inſtanced in many ſins, to which there is no other Temptation, but their being in faſhion. Secondly, There is incouragement in ſin, when either by approving, or elſe at leaſt by not ſhewing a diſlike, we give others confidence to go on in their wickedneſs. A third means is by juſtifying and defending any ſinful act of anothers, for by that we do not

only confirm him in his evil, but endanger the drawing others to the like, who may be the more inclinable to it, when they ſhall hear it ſo pleaded for. Laſtly, The bringing up any reproach upon ſtrict and Chriſtian living, as thoſe do who have the ways of God in deriſion; this is a means to affright Men from the practice of Duty, when they ſee it will bring them to be ſcorned and deſpiſed; this is worſe than all the former, not only in reſpect of the Man who is guilty of it (as it is an evidence of the great profaneneſs of his own heart) but alſo in regard of others, it having a more general ill effect than any of the former can have; it being the betraying Men, not only to ſome ſingle acts of diſobedience to Chriſt, but even to the caſting off all ſubjection to him; by all theſe means we may draw on our ſelves this great guilt of injuring and wounding the Souls of our Brethren.

Men ſadly to conſider whom they have thus injured.

9. It would be too long for me to inſtance in all the ſeveral ſins, in which it is uſual for Men to enſnare others; as drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, rebellion, and a multitude more. But it will concern every Man for his own particular, to conſider ſadly what miſchiefs of this kind he hath done to any, by all, or any of theſe means, and to weigh well the greatneſs of the injury. Men are apt to boaſt of their innocency towards their Neighbours, that they have done wrong to no Man; but God knows many that thus brag, are of all others the moſt injurious perſons: perhaps they have not maimed his Body, nor ſtoln his Goods: But alas! the Body is but the caſe and cover of the Man, and the Goods ſome appurtenances to that, 'tis the Soul is the Man, and that they can wound and pierce without remorſe, and yet with the Adultereſs, *Prov.* 30. 20. ſay, *They have done no wickedneſs*; but glory of their friendly behaviour to thoſe whom they thus betray to Eternal Ruin; for whomſoever thou haſt drawn to any ſin, thou haſt done thy part to aſcertain to thoſe endleſs flames. And then think with thy ſelf how baſe a treachery this is: thou wouldſt call him a treacherous Villain, that ſhould while he pretends to embrace a Man, ſecretly ſtab him: but this of thine is as far beyond that, as the Soul is of more value than the Body; and Hell worſe than Death. And remember yet farther, that beſides the cruelty of it to thy poor Brother, it is alſo moſt dangerous to thy ſelf, it being that againſt which Chriſt hath pronounced a woe, *Matth.* 18. 7. and verſe 6. he tells us, That *whoever ſhall offend* (that is draw into ſin) *any of thoſe little ones, it were better for him that a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the ſea.* Thou mayeſt plunge thy poor Brother into perdition: but as it is with wreſtlers, he that gives another a fall commonly falls with him, ſo thou art like to bear him company to that place of torment.

Heartily to bewail it.

10. Let therefore thy own and his danger beget in thee a ſenſe of the greatneſs of this ſin, this horrid piece of injuſtice to the precious Soul of thy Neighbour. Bethink thy ſelf ſeriouſly to whom thou haſt been thus cruel; whom thou haſt enticed to drinking, adviſed to rebellion, allur'd to luſt, ſtirred up to rage, whom thou haſt aſſiſted or incouraged in any ill courſe, or diſcouraged and diſheartned by thy profane ſcoffings at piety in general, or at any conſcionable ſtrict walking of his in particular; and then draw up a bill of Indictment; accuſe and condemn thy ſelf as a *Cain*, a murtherer of thy Brother, heartily and deeply bewail all thy guilts of this kind, and reſolve never once more to be a ſtumbling-block, as S. *Paul* calls it, *Rom.* 14. in thy Brother's way.

Endeavour to repair it.

11. But this is not all, there muſt be ſome fruits of this Repentance brought forth; now in all ſins of Injuſtice, Reſtitution is a neceſſary fruit

of repentance, and ſo it is here, thou haſt committed an act (perhaps many) of high injuſtice to the Soul of thy brother; thou haſt robbed it of its innocency, of his title to Heaven, thou muſt now endeavour to reſtore all this to it again, by being more earneſt and induſtrious to win him to repentance, than ever thou wert to draw him to ſin: Uſe now as much art to convince him of the danger, as ever thou didſt to flatter him with the pleaſures of his Vice; in a word, countermine thy ſelf by uſing all thoſe methods and means to recover him, that thou didſt to deſtroy him, and be more diligent and zealous in it, for 'tis neceſſary thou ſhouldeſt, both in regard of him and thy ſelf. Firſt, In reſpect of him, becauſe there is in Man's Nature ſo much a greater promptneſs and readineſs to evil than to good, that there will need much more pains and diligence to inſtil the one into him, than the other: Beſides, The Man is ſuppoſed to be already accuſtomed to the contrary, which will add much to the difficulty of the work. Then in reſpect of thy ſelf; if thou be a true penitent, thou wilt think thy ſelf obliged, as S. *Paul* did, *To labour more abundantly*, and wilt be aſhamed, that when thou art trading for God, bringing back a Soul to him, thou ſhouldeſt not purſue it with more earneſtneſs than while thou wert an Agent of Satan's; beſides, the remembrance that thou wert a means of bringing this poor Soul into this ſnare muſt neceſſarily quicken thy diligence to get him out of it. So much for the firſt part of Negative Juſtice, in reſpect of the Souls of our Brethren.

Negative juſtice to the Body.

12. The ſecond concerns the Bodies, and to thoſe alſo this Juſtice binds thee to do no wrong nor violence. Now of wrongs to the Body there may be ſeveral degrees, the higheſt of them is killing, taking away the Life; this is forbid in the very letter of the ſixth Commandment; *Thou ſhalt do no murder.*

In reſpect of the Life.

Several ways of being guilty of Murder.

13. Murder may be committed either by open violence; when a Man either by Sword, or any other Inſtrument takes away another's Life, immediately and directly; or it may be done ſecretly and treacherouſly, as *David* murdered *Uriah*, not with his own Sword, but with the Sword of the Children of *Ammon*, 2 *Sam.* 11. 17. And *Jezebel Naboth* by a falſe accuſation, 1 *Kings* 21. 13. And ſo divers have committed this ſin of murder by poiſon, falſe-witneſs, or ſome ſuch concealed ways. The former is commonly the effect of a ſudden rage, the latter, hath ſeveral originals; ſometimes it proceeds from ſome old malice fixt in the heart towards the Perſon; ſometimes from ſome covetous or ambitious deſires; ſuch an one ſtands in a Man's way to his profit or preferment, and therefore he muſt be removed; and ſometimes again it is to cover ſhame, as in the caſe of Strumpets, that murder their Infants, that they may not betray their filthineſs. But beſides theſe more direct ways of killing, there is another, and that is, when by our perſwaſions and enticements we draw a Man to do that which tends to the ſhortning of his Life, and is apparent to do ſo; he that makes his Neighbour drunk, if by that drunkenneſs the Man comes to any mortal hurt, which he would have eſcaped if he had been ſober, he that made him drunk is not clear of his death; or if he die not by any ſuch ſudden accident, yet if drinking caſt him into a diſeaſe, and that diſeaſe kill him, I know not how he that drew him to that exceſs can acquit himſelf of his murder in the eyes of God, though humane Laws touch him not. I wiſh thoſe who make it their buſineſs to draw in cuſtomers to that trade of debauchery, would conſider it. There is yet another way of bringing this guilt upon our ſelves, and that is by inciting and ſtirring up others to it, or to that degree of anger and revenge which produces it; and

he that ſets two Perſons at variance, or ſeeing them already ſo, blows the coals, if Murder enſue, he certainly hath his ſhare in the guilt, which is a conſideration that ought to affright all from having any thing to do in the kindling or increaſing of contention.

The heinouſneſs of the ſin.

14. Now for the hainouſneſs of this ſin of Murder, I ſuppoſe none can be ignorant, that it is of the deepeſt die, a moſt loud crying ſin. This we may ſee in the firſt act of this kind, that ever was committed, *Abel's* blood cried from the Earth, as God tells *Cain*, *Gen.* 4. 10. Yea the guilt of this Sin is ſuch, that it leaves a ſtain even upon the Land where it is committed, ſuch as is not to be waſht out, but by the blood of the Murderer; as appears, *Deut.* 19. 12, 13. The Land cannot be purged of blood, but by the blood of him that ſhed it; and therefore though in other caſes the flying to the Altar ſecured a Man, yet in this of wilful Murder no ſuch refuge was allowed, but ſuch a one was to be taken even thence, and delivered up to Juſtice, *Exod.* 21. 14. *Thou ſhalt take him from my Altar that he may die.* And it is yet farther obſervable, that the only two Precepts which the Scripture mentions, as given to *Noah* after the flood, were both in relation to this ſin; that of not eating blood, *Gen.* 9. 4. being a Ceremony, to beget in Men a greater horrour of this ſin of Murder, and ſo intended for the preventing of it. The other was for the puniſhment of it, *Gen.* 9. 6. *He that ſheddeth man's blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed*; and the reaſon of this ſtrictneſs is added in the next words, *For in the Image of God made he man*; where you ſee that this ſin is not only an injury to our Brother, but even the higheſt contempt and deſpite towards God himſelf, for it is the defacing of his Image, which he hath ſtamped upon Man. Nay yet further, it is the uſurping of God's proper right and authority. For it is God alone, that hath right to diſpoſe of the Life of Man; 'twas he alone that gave it, and it is he alone that hath power to take it away; but he that Murders a Man, does, as it were, wreſt this power out of God's hand, which is the higheſt pitch of rebellious preſumption.

The great puniſhment attending it.

15. And as the ſin is great, ſo likewiſe is the puniſhment; we ſee it frequently very great, and remarkable, even in this World, (beſides thoſe moſt fearful effects of it in the next) blood not only cries, but it cries for vengeance, and the great God of recompences, as he ſtiles himſelf, will not fail to hear it: Very many examples the Scripture gives us of this: *Ahab* and *Jezebel*, that murdered innocent *Naboth*, for greedineſs of his Vineyard, were themſelves ſlain, and the Dogs licked their blood in the place where they had ſhed his, as you may read in that Story; ſo *Abſolom* that ſlew his brother *Amnon*, after he had commited that ſin, fell into another, that of Rebellion againſt his King and Father, and in it miſerably periſhed. *Rachab* and *Baanah*, that ſlew *Iſhboſheth* were themſelves put to death, and that by the very Perſon they thought to endear by it. Many more inſtances might be given of this out of the Sacred Story, and many alſo out of Humane, there having been no Age but hath yielded multitudes of examples of this kind, ſo that every man may furniſh himſelf out of the obſervations of his own time.

The ſtrange diſcoveries of it.

16. And it is worth our notice, what ſtrange and even miraculous means it hath often pleaſed God to uſe for the diſcovery of this ſin; the very brute Creatures have often been made inſtruments of it; nay, often the extreme horror of a Man's own Conſcience hath made him betray himſelf: So that it is not any cloſeneſs a Man uſes in the acting of this ſin, that can ſecure him from the vengeance of it, for he can never ſhut out his own Conſcience, that will in ſpight of him be privy to the fact, and that very

often proves the means of diſcovering it to the world; or if it ſhould not do that, yet it will ſure act revenge on him, it will be ſuch a Hell within him as will be worſe than death: This we have ſeen in many, who after the commiſſion of this ſin have never been able to enjoy a minutes reſt, but have had that intolerable anguiſh of mind, that they have choſen to be their own murderers rather than live in it. Theſe are the uſual effects of this ſin even in this world, but thoſe in another are yet more dreadful, where ſurely the higheſt degrees of Torment belong to this high pitch of wickedneſs: For if, as our Saviour tells us, *Matt.* 5. 22. Hell-fire be the portion of him that ſhall but call his Brother Fool, what degree of thoſe burnings can we think proportionable to this ſo much greater an injury?

We muſt watch diligently againſt all approaches of this ſin.

17. The conſideration of all this ought to poſſeſs us with the greateſt horror, and abomination of this ſin, and to make us extremely watchful of our ſelves, that we never fall into it, and to that end to prevent all thoſe occaſions which may inſenſibly draw us into this Pit. I mentioned at firſt ſeveral things which are wont to be originals of it, and at thoſe we muſt begin, if we will ſurely guard our ſelves. If therefore thou wilt be ſure never to kill a Man in thy rage, be ſure never to be in that rage, for if thou permitteſt thy ſelf to that, thou canſt have no ſecurity againſt the other, anger being a madneſs that ſuffers us not to conſider, or know what we do, when it has once poſſeſt us. Therefore when thou findeſt thy ſelf begin to be inflamed, think betimes whither this may lead thee, if thou letteſt looſe to it, and immediately put the bridle upon this head ſtrong paſſion; ſo again, if thou wilt be ſure thy malice ſhall not draw thee to it, be ſure never to harbour one malicious thought in thy heart, for if it once ſettle there, it will gather ſuch ſtrength, that within a while thou wilt be perfectly under the power of it, ſo that it may lead thee even to this horrible ſin at its pleaſure; be therefore careful at the very firſt approach of this treacherous gueſt, to ſhut the doors againſt it, never to let it enter thy mind; ſo alſo if thou wilt be ſure thy covetouſneſs, thy ambition, thy luſt, or any other ſinful deſire ſhall not betray thee to it, be ſure thou never permit any of them to bear any ſway with thee, for if they get the dominion, as they will ſoon do, if they be once entertained in the heart, they will be paſt thy controul, and hurry thee to this or any other ſin, that may ſerve their ends. In like manner, if thou wouldeſt not be guilty of any of the mortal effects of thy Neighbour's drunkenneſs, be ſure not to entice him to it, nor accompany him at it, and to that purpoſe do not allow thy ſelf in the ſame practice; for if thou do, thou wilt be labouring to get company at it. Laſtly, If thou wilt not be guilty of the Murder committed by another, take heed thou never give any incouragement to it, or contribute any thing to that hatred or contention, that may be the cauſe of it. For when thou haſt either kindled or blowed the fire, what knoweſt thou whom it may conſume? Bring always as much water as thou canſt to quench, but never bring one drop of oil to encreaſe the flame. The like may be ſaid of all other occaſions of this ſin not here mentioned; and this careful preſerving our ſelves from theſe, is the only ſure way to keep us from this ſin: Therefore as ever thou wouldeſt keep thy ſelf innocent from the greateſt offence, guard thee warily from all ſuch in-lets, thoſe ſteps and approaches towards it.

Maiming a great injury.

18. But although Murder be the greateſt, yet it is not the only injury that may be done to the Body of our Neighbour; there are others which are alſo of a very high Nature; the next in degree to this is maiming him, depriving him of any Member, or at leaſt of the uſe of it, and this is a very

great wrong and miſchief to him, as we may diſcern by the Judgment of God himſelf, in the caſe of the bond-ſervant, who ſhould by his Maſter's means loſe a member, *Exod.* 21. 26. the freedom of his whole Life was thought but a reaſonable recompence for it. *He ſhall let him go free*, ſaith the Text, *for his eye*; nay, though it were a leſs conſiderable part, if it were but a tooth, which of all other may be loſt with the leaſt damage, yet the ſame amends was to be made him, *verſe* 27.

That which every Man dreads for himſelf.

19. But we need no other way of meaſuring this injury, than the judgement of every Man in his own caſe; how much does every Man dread the loſs of a Limb? So that if he be by any accident or diſeaſe, in danger of it, he thinks no pains or coſt too much to preſerve it. And then how great an injuſtice, how contrary to that great rule of *doing as we would be done to*, is it, for a Man to do that to another, which he ſo unwillingly ſuffers himſelf?

Yet worſe if the man be poor.

But if the perſon be poor, one that muſt labour for his living, the injury is yet greater, it is ſuch as may in effect amount to the former ſin of Murder; for as the Wiſe Man ſays, *Ecclus.* 24. 21. *The poor man's bread is his life, and he that deprives them thereof is a blood-ſhedder.* And therefore he that deprives him of the means of getting his bread, by diſabling him from labour, is ſurely no leſs guilty. In the Law it was permitted to every Man that had ſuſtained ſuch a damage by his Neighbour, to require the Magiſtrate to inflict the like on him, *eye for eye, tooth for tooth*, as it is *Exod.* 21. 24.

Neceſſity of making what ſatisfaction we can.

20. And though unprofitable revenge be not now allowed to us Chriſtians, yet ſure it is the part of every one who hath done this injury, to make what ſatisfaction lies in his power; 'tis true he cannot reſtore a Limb again (which by the way ſhould make men wary how they do thoſe miſchiefs which it is ſo impoſſible for them to repair) but yet he may ſatisfie for ſome of the ill effects of that loſs. If that have brought the Man to want and penury, he may, nay, he muſt, if he have but the leaſt ability, relieve and ſupport him, yea, though it be by his own extraordinary labour: For if it be a duty of us all to be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, as *Job* ſpeaks, much more muſt we be ſo to them whom our ſelves have made blind and lame. Therefore whoever hath done this injury to any of his poor Brethren, let him know he is bound to do all that is poſſible towards the repairing of it; if he do not, every new ſuffering that the poor Man's wants bring upon him, becomes a new charge and accuſation againſt him, at the Tribunal of the juſt Judge.

Wounds and ſtripes injuries alſo.

21. There are yet other degrees of injury to the Body of our Neighbour. I ſhall mention only two more, Wounds and Stripes; a Man may wound another, which though it finally cauſe loſs neither of life nor limb, is yet an endangering of both; and the like may be ſaid of ſtripes; both of which however are very painful at the preſent, nay perhaps very long after; and Pain, of all temporal evils, is to be accounted the greateſt, for it is not only an evil in it ſelf, but it is ſuch an one, that permits us not, whileſt we are under it, to enjoy any other good; a Man in pain having no taſte of any the greateſt delights: If any Man deſpiſe theſe, as light injuries, let him again ask himſelf, how he would like it, to have his own body ſlaſht or bruiſed, and put to paſs under thoſe painful means of Cure, which are many times neceſſary in ſuch caſes? I preſume there is no Man would willingly undergo this from another, and why then ſhouldeſt thou offer it to him?

22. The

This cruelty to others the effect of pride.

22. The truth is, This ſtrange cruelty to others is the effect of a great pride, and haughtineſs of Heart: We look upon others with ſuch contempt, that we think it no matter how they are uſed; we think they muſt bear blows from us, when in the mean time we are ſo tender of our ſelves, that we cannot hear the leaſt word of diſparagement, but we are all on a flame. The provocations to theſe injuries are commonly ſo ſlight, that did not this inward Pride diſpoſe us to ſuch an angrineſs of humour that we take fire at every thing, it were impoſſible we ſhould be moved by them. Nay ſome are advanced to ſuch a wantonneſs of cruelty, that without any provocation at all, in cool blood, as they ſay, they can thus wrong their poor brethren, and make it part of their paſtime and recreation to cauſe pain to others. Thus ſome tyrannous humours take ſuch a pleaſure in tormenting thoſe under their power, that they are glad when they can but find a pretence to puniſh them, and then do it without all moderation: And others will ſet men together by the ears, only that they may have the ſport of ſeeing the ſcuffle; like the old *Romans*, that made it one of their publick ſports to ſee men kill one another; and ſure we have as little Chriſtianity as they, if we can take delight in ſuch ſpectacles.

23. This ſavageneſs and cruelty of mind is ſo unbecoming the Nature of a Man, that he is not allowed to uſe it even to his Beaſt; how intolerable is it then towards thoſe, that are of the ſame nature, and which is more, are heirs of the ſame eternal hopes with us? They that ſhall thus tranſgreſs againſt their Neighbours in any of the foregoing particulars, or whatever elſe is hurtful to the body, are unjuſt perſons, want even this loweſt ſort of juſtice, the Negative to their Neighbours, in reſpect of their bodies.

24. Neither can any Man excuſe himſelf by ſaying what he has done was only in return of ſome injury offered him by the other; for ſuppoſe it be ſo, that he have indeed received ſome conſiderable wrong, yet cannot he be his own revenger without injury to that Man, who is not, by being thine enemy, become thy vaſſal, or ſlave, to do with him what thou liſt; thou haſt never the more right of dominion over him, becauſe he hath done thee wrong, and therefore if thou hadſt no power over his body before, 'tis certain thou haſt none now, and therefore thou art not only uncharitable (which yet were ſin enough to damn thee) but unjuſt in every act of violence thou doſt to him. Nay, this injuſtice aſcends higher, even to God himſelf, who hath reſerved vengeance as his own peculiar right. *Vengeance is mine, I will repay, ſaith the Lord, Rom.* 12. 19. and then he that will act revenge for himſelf, what does he, but incroach upon this ſpecial right and prerogative of God, ſnatch the ſword, as it were, out of his hand, as if he knew better how to wield it? Which is at once a robbery, and contempt of the Divine Majeſty.

SUNDAY XI.

Of Juſtice about the poſſeſſions of our Neighbour; againſt injuring him, as concerning his Wife, his Goods. Of Oppreſſion, Theft. Of paying of Debts, &c.

His poſſeſſions.

Sect. 1. THE third part of Negative Juſtice concerns the Poſſeſſions of our Neighbours; what I mean by Poſſeſſions, I cannot better explain than by referring you to the Tenth Commandment, the end of which is to bridle all covetous appetites and deſires towards the Poſſeſſions of our Neighbour. There we find reckoned up, not only his Houſe, Servants and Cattle, which may all paſs under the one general name of his Goods or Riches, but particularly his Wiſe, as a principal part of his poſſeſſions, and therefore when we conſider this duty of Negative Juſtice, in reſpect of the poſſeſſions of our Neighbour, we muſt apply it to both, his Wiſe as well as his Goods.

His Wife.

2. The eſpecial and peculiar right that every Man hath in his Wiſe is ſo well known, that it were in vain to ſay any thing in proof of it; the great impatience that every Husband hath to have this right of his invaded, ſhews that it is ſufficiently underſtood in the World, and therefore none that does this injury to another, can be ignorant of the greatneſs of it. The corrupting of a Man's Wiſe, enticing her to a ſtrange bed, is by all acknowledged to be the worſt ſort of Theft, infinitely beyond that of the Goods.

The enticing a man's wife the greateſt injuſtice.

To the Woman.

3. Indeed there is in this one, a heap of the greateſt injuſtices together; ſome towards the Woman, and ſome towards the Man: Towards the Woman there are the greateſt imaginable; it is that injuſtice to her Soul, which was before mentioned as the higheſt of all others, 'tis the robbing her of her innocency, and ſetting her in a courſe of the horridſt wickedneſs (no leſs than luſt and perjury together) from which it is probable ſhe may never return, and then it proves the damning of her Eternally. Next it is in reſpect of this World the robbing her of her credit, making her abhorred and deſpiſed, and her very name a reproach among all men; and beſides, it is the depriving her of all that happineſs of life, which ariſes from the mutual kindneſs and affection that is between Man and Wife, inſtead whereof this brings in a loathing and abhorring of each other, from whence flow multitudes of miſchiefs, too many to rehearſe, in all which the Man hath his ſhare alſo.

To the Man.

4. But beſides thoſe, there are to him many and high injuſtices; for it is firſt the robbing him of that, which of all other things he accounts moſt precious, the love and faithfulneſs of his Wiſe, and that alſo wherein he hath ſuch an incommunicable right: that himſelf cannot, if he would, make it over to any other; and therefore ſure it cannot without the utmoſt injuſtice be torn from him by any. Nor is this all, but it is farther the ingulfing him (if ever he come to diſcern it) in that moſt tormenting paſſion of jealouſie, which is of all others the moſt painful, and which oft puts men upon the moſt deſperate attempts, it being, as *Solomon* ſays, *Prov. 6. 34. The rage of a man.* It is yet farther, the bringing upon him all that ſcorn and contempt which by the unjuſt meaſures of the world fall on them, which are ſo abuſed, and which is by many eſteemed the moſt inſufferable part of the wrong; and though it be true, that it is very unjuſt he ſhould fall under reproach, only becauſe he is injured, yet unleſs the world could be new moulded, it will certainly be his lot, and therefore it adds much to the injury. Again, This may indeed be a robbery in the uſual ſenſe of the word, for perhaps it may be the thruſting in the Child of the Adulterer into his Family, to ſhare both in the maintenance and portions of his own Children; and this is an arrand Theft: Firſt, In reſpect of the Man, who ſurely intends not the providing for another Man's Child, and then in reſpect of the Children, who are by that means defrauded of ſo much as that goes away with. And therefore whoſoever hath this circumſtance of the ſin to repent of, cannot do it effectually, without reſtoring to the Family, as much as he hath by this means robb'd it of.

The moſt irreparable.

5. All this put together will ſure make this the greateſt and moſt provoking injury that can be done to a Man, and (which heightens it yet more) it is that, for which a Man can never make reparation; for unleſs it be in the circumſtance before mentioned, there is no part of this ſin, wherein that can be done; to this purpoſe it is obſervable in the Jewiſh Law, that the Thief was appointed to reſtore fourfold, and that freed him; but the Adulterer having no poſſibility of making any reſtitution, any ſatisfaction, he muſt pay his Life for his offence, *Lev.* 20. 10. And though now adays Adulterers ſpeed better, live many days to renew their guilt, and perhaps to laugh at thoſe, whom they have thus injured, yet let them be aſſured, there muſt one day be a ſad reckoning, and that whether they repent or not; If by God's grace they do come to repentance, they will then find this to be no cheap ſin, many anguiſhes of Soul, terrors and perplexities of Conſcience, groans and tears it muſt coſt them; and indeed were a Man's whole Life ſpent in theſe penitential exerciſes, 'twere little enough to wipe off the guilt of any one ſingle act of this kind; what overwhelming ſorrows then are requiſite for ſuch a trade of this ſin, as too many drive? Certainly it is ſo great a task, that it is highly neceſſary for all that are ſo concerned, to ſet to it immediately, leſt they want time to go through with it; for let no Man flatter himſelf, that the guilt of a courſe and habit of ſuch a ſin can be waſht away with a ſingle act of repentance, no, he muſt proportion the repentance to the fault, and as one hath been a habit and courſe, ſo muſt the other alſo. And then how ſtrange a madneſs is it for Men to run into this ſin, (and that with ſuch painful purſuits, as many do (which he knows muſt at the beſt hand, that is, ſuppoſing he do repent of it, coſt him thus dear? But then if he do not repent, infinitely dearer: It loſes him all his title to Heaven, that place of Purity, and gives him his portion in the lake of fire, where the burnings of his luſt ſhall end in thoſe everlaſting burnings; For how cloſely ſoever he hath acted this ſin, be it ſo that he may have ſaid with the Adulterer in *Job* 25. 15. *No eye ſeeth me*, yet 'tis ſure he could not in the greateſt obſcurity ſhelter himſelf from God's ſight, with whom *the darkneſs is no darkneſs*, *Pſalm* 139. 12. And he it is, who hath expreſly threatned to judge this ſort of offenders, *Heb.* 13. 4. *Adulterers God will judge.* God grant that all that live in this foul guilt, may ſo ſeaſonably, and ſo throughly judge themſelves, that they may prevent that ſevere and dreadful judgment of his.

His Goods.

6. The ſecond thing to which this Negative Juſtice to our Neighbour's poſſeſſions reacheth, is his Goods, under which general word is contained all thoſe ſeveral ſorts of things, as Houſe, Land, Cattle, Money, and the like, in which he hath a right and property; theſe we are by the rule of this juſtice to ſuffer him to enjoy, without ſeeking either to work him damage in any of them, or to get any of them to our ſelves: I make a difference between theſe two, becauſe there may be two ſeveral grounds or motives of this injuſtice; the one Malice, the other Covetouſneſs.

Malicious Injuſtice.

7. The Malicious Man deſires to work his Neighbour's miſchief, though he get nothing by it himſelf; 'tis frequently ſeen that Men will make havock and ſpoil of the Goods of one, to whom they bear a grudge, though they never deſign to get any thing to themſelves by it, but only the pleaſure of doing a ſpite to the other. This is a moſt helliſh humour, directly anſwerable to that of the Devil, who beſtows all his pains and induſtry not to bring in any good to himſelf, but only to ruine and undo others: And how contrary it is to all rules of Juſtice, you may ſee by the Precept

given by God to the Jews concerning the Goods of an Enemy; where they were ſo far from being allowed a liberty of ſpoil and deſtruction, that they are expreſly bound to prevent it, *Exod.* 23. 4, 5. *If thou meet thine enemies Ox, or his Aſs going aſtray, thou ſhalt ſurely bring it back to him again: If thou ſee the Aſs of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldſt forbear to help him, thou ſhalt ſurely help with him:* Where you ſee it is a debt we owe to our very Enemies, to prevent that loſs and damage, which by any accident he is in danger of: And that even with ſome labour and pains to our ſelves. How horrible an injuſtice is it then, purpoſely to bring that loſs and damage on him? Whoever is guilty of this, let him never excuſe himſelf by ſaying, he hath not enricht himſelf by the ſpoil of his Neighbour, that he hath nothing of it cleaves to his finger, for ſure this malicious injuſtice is no leſs a fault than the covetous one; nay, I ſuppoſe in reſpect of the principle and cauſe from which it flows; it may be greater, this hatred of another being worſe than the immoderate love of our ſelves; whoever hath thus miſchieft his Neighbour, he is as much bound to repair the injury, to make ſatisfaction for the loſs, as if he had enriched himſelf by it.

Covetous injuſtice.

8. But on the other ſide, let not the covetous defrauder therefore judge his ſin light, becauſe there is another, that in ſome one reſpect out-weighs it, for perhaps in others his may caſt the ſcales; certainly it does in this one, that he that is unjuſt for greedineſs of gain, is like to multiply more acts of this ſin, than he that is ſo out of malice? for 'tis impoſſible any man ſhould have ſo many objects of his malice, as he may have of his covetouſneſs; there is no man at ſo general a defiance with all mankind, that he hates every body; but the covetous man hath as many objects of his vice, as there be things in the world he counts valuable. But I ſhall not longer ſtand upon this compariſon, 'tis ſure they are both great and crying ſins, and that is ground enough of abhorring each: Let us deſcend now to the ſeveral branches of this ſort of Covetous injuſtice; 'tis true they may all bear the name of robbery, or theft, for in effect they are all ſo, yet for methods ſake, it will not be amiſs to diſtinguiſh them into theſe three; Oppreſſion, Theft, and Deceit.

Oppreſſion.

9. By Oppreſſion I mean that open and bare-faced robbery, of ſeizing upon the poſſeſſions of others, and owning and avowing the doing ſo. For the doing of this there are ſeveral inſtruments; as firſt, that of power, by which many Nations and Princes have been turned out of their rights, and many private Men out of their Eſtates: Sometimes again, Law is made the inſtrument of it; he that covets his Neighbour's Lands or Goods, pretends a claim to them, and then by corrupting of Juſtice by Bribes and Gifts, or elſe over-ruling it by greatneſs and authority, gets Judgment on his ſide: This is a high oppreſſion, and of the worſt ſort, thus to make the Law, which was intended for the protection and defence of mens Rights, to be the means of overthrowing them; and it is a very heavy guilt, that lies both on him that procures, and on him that pronounces ſuch a ſentence, yea, and on the Lawyer too, that pleads ſuch a cauſe, for by ſo doing he aſſiſts in the oppreſſion. Sometimes again, the very neceſſities of the oppreſſed are the means of his oppreſſion, thus it is in the caſe of Extortion, and griping Uſury: A man is in extreme want of Money, and this gives opportunity to the Extortioner to wreſt unconſcionably from him, to which the poor Man is forced to yield, to ſupply his preſent wants. And thus alſo it is often with exacting Land-lords, who, when their poor Tenants know not how to provide themſelves elſewhere, rack

and ſkrew them beyond the worth of the thing. All theſe and many the like are but ſeveral ways of acting this one ſin of Oppreſſion, which becomes yet the more heinous, by how much the more helpleſs the perſon is that is thus oppreſſed, therefore the oppreſſion of the widow and Fatherleſs, is in Scripture mentioned as the height of this ſin.

God's vengeance againſt it.

10. It is indeed a moſt crying guilt, and that againſt which God hath threatned his heavy vengeance, as we read in divers Texts of Scripture; thus it is, *Ezek.* 18. 12. *He that hath oppreſſed the poor,* and hath ſpoiled by violence, he ſhall ſurely die, *his blood ſhall be upon him*; and the ſame ſentence is repeated againſt him, *verſe* 18. Indeed God hath ſo peculiarly taken upon him the protection of the poor and oppreſſed, that he is engaged as it were in honour to be their avenger; and accordingly *Pſalm* 12. we ſee God ſolemnly declare his reſolution of appearing for them, verſe 5. *For the oppreſſion of the poor, for the ſighing of the needy, now will I ariſe, ſaith the Lord, I will ſet him in ſafety from him.* The advice therefore of *Solomon* is excellent, *Prov.* 22. 22. *Rob not the poor, becauſe he is poor; neither oppreſs the afflicted in the gate, for the Lord will plead their cauſe, and will ſpoil the ſoul of thoſe that ſpoiled them*; they are like in the end to have little joy of the booty it brings them in, when it thus engages God againſt them.

Theft.

11. The ſecond ſort of this injuſtice is Theft, and of that alſo there are two kinds, the one the with-holding what we ſhould pay, and the other taking from our Neighbour what is already in his poſſeſſion,

Not paying what we borrow.

12. Of the firſt ſort is the not paying of debts, whether ſuch as we have borrowed, or ſuch as by our own voluntary promiſe are become our debts, for they are equally due to him that can lay either of theſe claims to them; and therefore the with-holding of either of them is a Theft, a keeping from my Neighbour that which is his; yet the former of them is rather the more injurious, for by that I take from him that which he once actually had (be it money or whatever elſe) and ſo make him worſe than I found him. This is a very great, and very common injuſtice. Men can now-adays with as great confidence deny him that asks a debt, as they do him that asks an alms; nay, many times it is made matter of quarrel for a man to demand his own: Beſides the many attendances the Creditor is put to in purſuit of it, are a yet farther injury to him, by waſting his time, and taking him off from other buſineſs, and ſo he is made a loſer that way too. This is ſo great injuſtice, that I ſee not how a man can look upon any thing he poſſeſſes as his own right, whilſt he thus denies another his. It is the duty of every Man in debt, rather to ſtrip himſelf of all, and caſt himſelf again naked upon God's providence, then thus to feather his neſt with the ſpoils of his Neighbours. And ſurely it would prove the more thriving courſe, not only in reſpect of the bleſſing which may be expected upon juſtice, compared with the curſe that attends the contrary, but even in worldly prudence alſo; ſo rhe that defers paying of debts, will at laſt be forc'd to it by Law, and that upon much worſe terms than he might have done it voluntarily, with a greater charge, and with ſuch a loſs of his credit, that afterward in his greateſt neceſſities he will not know where to borrow. But the ſure way for a Man to ſecure himſelf from the guilt of this injuſtice, is never to borrow more than he knows he hath means to repay, unleſs it be of one, who knowing his diſability, is willing to run the hazard. Otherwiſe he commits this ſin at the very time of borrowing; for he takes that from his Neighbour upon promiſe of paying, which he knows he is never likely to reſtore to him, which is a flat robbery.

What we are bound for.

The ſame juſtice which ties Men to pay their own debts, ties alſo every ſurety to pay thoſe debts of others for which he ſtands bound, in caſe the principal either cannot or will not: For by being bound, he hath made it his own debt, and muſt in all Juſtice anſwer it to the Creditor, who, it's preſumed, was drawn to lend on confidence of his ſecurity, and therefore is directly cheated and betrayed by him, if he ſee him not ſatisfied. If it be thought hard, that a Man ſhould pay for that which he never received benefit by; I ſhall yield it, ſo far as to be juſt matter of warineſs to every Man how he enter into ſuch engagements, but it can never be made an excuſe for the breaking them.

What we have promiſed.

As for the other ſort of debt, that which is brought upon a Man by his own voluntary promiſe, that alſo cannot without great Injuſtice be with holden: For it is now the Man's right, and then 'tis no matter, by what means it came to be ſo. Therefore we ſee *David* makes it part of the deſcription of a juſt Man, *Pſalm* 15.4. That he keeps his Promiſes, yea, *though they were made to his own diſadvantage:* And ſurely, he is utterly unfit to aſcend to that holy Hill, there ſpoken of, either as that ſignifies the Church here, or Heaven hereafter, that does not punctually obſerve this part of Juſtice. To this ſort of debt may be reduced the wages of the ſervant, the hire of the labourer; and the withholding of theſe is a great ſin, and the complaints of thoſe that are thus injured, aſcend up to God. *Behold* (ſaith *S. James*) *the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth, and the cries of them that have reaped, are entred into the ear of the Lord of Sabbaoth: Deut.* 25. 14, 15. We find a ſtrict command in this matter, *Thou ſhalt not oppreſs a hired ſervant that is poor and needy, at his day thou ſhalt give him his hire, neither ſhall the Sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and ſetteth his heart upon it, leſt he cry againſt thee to the Lord, and it be ſin unto thee.* This is one of thoſe loud clamorous ſins which will not ceaſe crying, till it bring down God's vengeance; and therefore, though thou haſt no juſtice to thy poor brother, yet have at leaſt ſo much mercy to thy ſelf, as not to pull down judgments on thee by thus wronging him.

SUNDAY XII.

Of Theft; Stealing; of deceit in Truſt, in Traffick; of Reſtitution, &c.

Stealing the Goods of our Neighbour.

Sect. 1. THE ſecond part of Theft, is the taking from our Neighbour that which is already in his poſſeſſion: And this may be done either more violently, and openly, or elſe more cloſely and ſlily; The firſt is, the manner of thoſe that rob on the way, or plunder Houſes, where by force they take the Goods of their Neighbour; the other is the way of the pilfering Thief, that takes away a Man's Goods unknown to him; I ſhall not diſpute which of theſe is the worſt, 'tis enough that they are both ſuch acts of Injuſtice, as make Men odious to God, unfit for humane ſociety, and betray the Actors to the greateſt miſchiefs even in this World, death it ſelf being by Law appointed the reward of it; and there are few that follow this Trade long, but at laſt meet with that fruit of it. I am ſure 'tis madneſs for any to believe he ſhall always ſteal ſecurely, for he is to contend with the induſtry of all thoſe whom he ſhall thus injure, whoſe loſſes will quicken their wits for the finding him out; and which is infinitely more, he is to ſtruggle with the juſtice of God, which doth uſually purſue ſuch Men to deſtruction, even in this World; witneſs the many ſtrange diſcoveries that have been made of the craftieſt Thieves. But however, if he were ſecure from the vengeance here, I am ſure nothing but repentance and reformation can ſecure him from the vengeance of it hereafter. And now when theſe dangers are weighed, 'twill ſure appear, that the Thief makes a pitiful bargain, he ſteals his Neighbour's Money, or Cattle, and in exchange for it he muſt pay his Life, or his Soul, perhaps both; and if *the whole World be too mean a price for a Soul,* as he tells us, *Mark* 8. 36. who beſt knew the value of them, having himſelf bought them, what a ſtrange madneſs is it, to barter them away for every petty trifle, as many do, who have got ſuch a habit of ſtealing, that not the meaneſt worthleſs thing can eſcape their fingers? Under this head of Theft may be ranked the Receivers of ſtoln goods, whether thoſe that take them, as Partners in the Theft, or thoſe that buy them, when they know or believe they are ſtoln. This many (that pretend much to abhor Theft) are guilty of, when they can by it, buy the thing a little cheaper than the common rate. And here alſo comes in the concealing of any Goods a Man finds of his Neighbour's, which whoſoever reſtores not, if he know, or can learn out the owner, is no better than a Thief; for he withholds from his Neighbour that which properly belongs to him: And ſure it will not be uncharitable to ſay, that he that will do this, would likewiſe commit the groſſer Theft, were he by that no more in danger of Law than in this he is.

Deceit.

The third part of Injuſtice is Deceit, and in that there may be as many acts as there are occaſions of entercourſe and dealing between Man and Man.

2. It were impoſſible to name them all, but I think they will be contained under theſe two general deceits, in matters of Truſt, and in matters of Traffick or Bargaining: Unleſs it be that of Gaming, which therefore here by the way, I muſt tell you, is as much a fraud and deceit as any of the reſt.

In Truſt.

3. He that deceives a Man in any Truſt that is committed to him, is guilty of a great Injuſtice, and that the moſt treacherous ſort of one, it is the joyning of two great ſins in one, defrauding and promiſe-breaking; for in all Truſts there is a Promiſe implied, if not expreſt; for the very accepting of the Truſt contains under it a Promiſe of fidelity; theſe Truſts are broken ſometimes to the Living, ſometimes to the Dead; to the Living there are many ways of doing it, according to the ſeveral kinds of the Truſt; ſometimes a Truſt is more general, like that of *Potiphar* to *Joſeph, Gen.* 39. 4. a Man commits to another all that he hath, and thus Guardians of Children, and ſometimes Stewards are intruſted; ſometimes again it is more limited, and reſtrained to ſome one ſpecial thing; a Man intruſts another to bargain or deal for him in ſuch a particular, or he puts ſome one thing into his hands, to manage and diſpoſe: Thus among ſervants it is uſual for one to be entruſted with one part of the Maſters Goods, and another with another part of them. Now in all theſe, and the like caſes, whoſoever acts not for him that intruſts him, with the ſame faithfulneſs, that he would for himſelf, but ſhall either careleſly loſe, or prodigally embezle the things committed to him, or elſe convert them to his own uſe, he is guilty of this great ſin of betraying a truſt to the living. In like manner, he that being intruſted with the execution of a dead Man's Teſtament, acts not according to the known intention of the dead Man,

but enriches himſelf by what is aſſigned to others, he is guilty of this ſin, in reſpect of the dead, which is ſo much the greater, by how much the dead hath no means of remedy and redreſs, as the living may have. It is a kind of robbing of Graves, which is a theſt of which Men naturally have ſuch a horror, that he muſt be a very hardned Thief, that can attempt it. But either of theſe frauds are made yet more hainous, when either God, or the Poor are immediately concern'd in it, that is, when any thing is committed to a Man, for the uſes either of Piety, or Charity; this adds ſacrilege to both the fraud and the treachery, and ſo gives him title to all thoſe curſes that attend thoſe ſeveral ſins, which are ſo heavy, that he that for the preſent gain will adventure on them, makes as ill, nay, a much worſe bargain than *Gehazi*, 2 Kings 5. 27. who *by getting the raiment of* Naaman, *got his leproſie too.*

In Traffick.

4. The ſecond ſort of fraud is in matters of Traffick and Bargain, wherein there may be deceit both in the Seller and Buyer; and that of the Seller is commonly either in concealing the faults of the commodity, or elſe in over-rating it.

The Seller's concealing the faults of his Ware.

5. The ways of concealing its faults are ordinarily theſe, either firſt by denying that it hath any ſuch fault, nay, perhaps commending it for the direct contrary quality, and this is downright lying, and ſo adds that ſin to the other, and if that Lye be confirmed by an Oath, as it is too uſually, then the yet greater guilt of Perjury comes in alſo; and then, what a heap of ſins is here gathered together? Abundantly enough to ſink a poor Soul to deſtruction, and all this only to ſkrew a little more Money out of his Neighbour's Pocket, and that ſometimes ſo very little, that 'tis a miracle that any Man that thinks he has a Soul, can ſet it at ſo miſerable a contemptible price. A ſecond means of concealing is by uſing ſome Art to the thing, to make it look fair, and to hide the faults of it, and this is acting a Lye, though it be not ſpeaking one, which amounts to the ſame thing, and has ſurely in this caſe as much of the intention of cheating and defrauding, as the moſt impudent forſwearing can have. A third means is the picking out ignorant Chapmen; This is, I believe, an Art too well known among Tradeſmen, who will not bring out their faulty wares to Men of Skill, but keep them to put off to ſuch, whoſe unskilfulneſs may make them paſſable with them: and this is ſtill the ſame deceit with the former; for it all tends to the ſame end, the cozening and defrauding of the Chapman, and then it is not much odds, whether I make uſe of my own Art, or his weakneſs for the purpoſe. This is certain, he that will do juſtly, muſt let his Chapman know what he buys; and if his own skill enable him not to judge, (nay, if he do not actually find out the fault) thou art bound to tell it him, otherwiſe thou makeſt him pay for ſomewhat which is not there, he preſuming there is that good quality in it, which thou knoweſt is not, and therefore thou mayeſt as honeſtly take his Money for ſome goods of another Man's which thou knoweſt thou canſt never put into his poſſeſſion, which I ſuppoſe no Man will deny to be an arrant cheat. To this head of concealment may be referred that deceit of falſe Weights and Meaſures, for that is the concealing from the Buyer a defect in the quantity, as the other was in the quality of the Commodity, and is again the making him pay for what he hath not. This ſort of fraud is pointed at particularly by *Solomon*, *Prov.* 11. 1. with this note upon it, that *it is an abomination to the Lord.*

His over-rating.

6. The ſecond part of fraud in the Seller, lies in over-rating the Commodity; though he have not diſguiſed or concealed the faults of it, and

ſo have dealt fairly in that reſpect, yet if he ſets an unreaſonable price upon it, he defrauds the Buyer. I call that an unreaſonable price, which exceeds the true worth of the thing, conſider'd with thoſe moderate gains, which all Tradeſmen are preſumed to be allowed in the Sale: Whatever is beyond this muſt in all likelihood be fetcht in by ſome of theſe ways: as firſt, by taking advantage of the Buyers ignorance in the value of the thing, which is the ſame with doing it in the goodneſs, which hath already been ſhewed to be a deceit; or ſecondly, by taking advantage of his neceſſity: Thou findeſt a Man hath preſent and urgent need of ſuch a thing, and therefore takeſt this opportunity to ſet the Dice upon him: but this is that very ſin of Extortion, and Oppreſſion ſpoken of before, for it is ſure, nothing can juſtly raiſe the price of any thing, but either its becoming dearer to thee; or its being ſome way better in it ſelf; but the neceſſity of thy brother cauſes neither of theſe; his nakedneſs doth not make the clothes thou ſelleſt him ſtand thee in ever the more, neither doth it make them any way better; and therefore to rate them ever the higher is to change the way of trading, and ſell even the wants and neceſſities of thy Neighbour, which ſure is a very unlawful vocation. Or thirdly, it may be by taking advantage of the indiſcretion of the Chapman. A Man perhaps earneſtly fancies ſuch a thing, and then ſuffers that fancy ſo to overrule his Reaſon, that he reſolves to have it upon any terms. If thou findeſt this in him, and thereupon raiſeſt thy rate, this is to make him buy his folly, which is of all others the deareſt purchace; 'tis ſure his fancy adds nothing to the real value, no more than his neceſſity did in the former caſe, and therefore ſhould not add to the price. He therefore that will deal juſtly in the buſineſs of ſelling, muſt not catch at all advantages, which the temper of his Chapman may give, but conſider ſoberly, what the thing is worth, and what he would afford it for to another, of whom he had no ſuch advantage, and accordingly rate it to him at no higher a price.

Fraud in the Buyer.

7. On the Buyers part there are not ordinarily ſo many opportunities of Fraud; yet it is poſſible a Man may ſometimes happen to ſell ſomewhat, the worth whereof he is not acquainted with, and then it will be as unjuſt for the Buyer to make gain by his ignorance, as in the other caſe it was for the Seller: But that which often falls out, is the caſe of neceſſity, which may as probably fall on the Seller's ſide, as the Buyers: A Man's wants compel him to ſell, and permit him not to ſtay to make the beſt bargain, but force him to take the firſt offer, and here for the Buyer to grate upon him, becauſe he ſees him in that ſtrait, is the ſame fault which I before ſhewed it to be in the Seller.

Many temptations to deceit in Traffick.

8. In this whole buſineſs of Traffick there are ſo many opportunities of deceit, that a Man had need fence himſelf with a very firm reſolution, nay, love of Juſtice, or he will be in danger to fall under temptation; for as the Wiſe Man ſpeaks, *Ecclus.* 27. 2. *As a Nail ſticks faſt between the joynings of the Stones*; ſo doth ſin ſtick cloſe between buying and ſelling, it is ſo interwoven with all Trades, ſo mixt with the very firſt principles and grounds of them, that it is taught together with them, and ſo becomes part of the Art; ſo that he is now-a-days ſcarce thought fit to manage a Trade, that wants it, while he that hath moſt of this black Art of defrauding, applauds and hugs himſelf, nay, perhaps boaſts to others, how he hath over-reacht his Neighbour.

The commonneſs of injuſtice a reproach to Chriſtianity.

What an intolerable ſhame is this, that we Chriſtians, who are by the precepts of our Maſter ſet to thoſe higher duties of Charity, ſhould inſtead of practiſing them, quite unlearn thoſe common rules of juſtice, which meer nature teaches? For, I think, I may ſay, there are none of thoſe ſeveral branches of injuſtice towards the poſſeſſions of our neighbour, which would not be adjudged to be ſo by any ſober Heathen; ſo that, as S. *Paul* tells thoſe of the Circumciſion, that the Name of God *was blaſphemed among the Gentiles*, by that unagreeableneſs that was betwixt their practice, and their Law, *Rom.* 2. 24. So now may it be ſaid of us, that the *Name of Chriſt is blaſphemed among the Turks and Heathens* by the vile and ſcandalous lives of us, who call our ſelves Chriſtians, and particularly in this ſin of injuſtice; for ſhame let us at laſt endeavour to wipe off this reproach from our profeſſion, by leaving theſe practices; to which methinks this one ſingle conſideration ſhould be enough to perſwade us.

It is not the way to enrich a Man.

9. Yet beſides this, there want not other; among which, one there is of ſuch a nature, as may prevail with the arranteſt worldling, and that is, that this courſe doth not really tend to the enriching of him; there is a ſecret curſe goes along with it, which, like a Canker, eats out all the benefit was expected from it. This no Man can doubt that believes the Scripture, where there are multitudes of Texts to this purpoſe: Thus *Prov.* 22. 16. *He that oppreſſeth the poor to encreaſe his riches, ſhall ſurely come to want.* So Habbak. 2. 6. *Wo to him that encreaſeth that which is not his! how long? And he that ladeth himſelf with thick Clay, ſhall they not riſe up ſuddenly that ſhall bite thee, and awake that ſhall vex thee? And thou ſhalt be for booties to them.* This is commonly the fortune of thoſe that ſpoil and deceive others, they at laſt meet with ſome that do the like to them. But the place in *Zachary* is moſt full to this purpoſe, *Chap.* 5. where under the ſign of a flying roll is ſignified the curſe that goes forth againſt this ſin, *Verſe* 4. *I will bring it forth, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, and it ſhall enter into the houſe of the Thief, and into the houſe of him that ſweareth falſly by my Name, and it ſhall conſume it with the timber thereof, and with the ſtones thereof.* Where you ſee, Theft and Perjury are the two ſins, againſt which this curſe is aimed (and they too often go together in the matter of defrauding (and the nature of this curſe is to conſume the houſe, to make an utter deſtruction of all that belongs to him that is guilty of either of theſe ſins. Thus whileſt thou art ravening after thy Neighbours Goods or Houſe, thou art but gathering fuel to burn thine own. And the effect of theſe threatnings of God we daily ſee in the ſtrange improſperouſneſs of ill-gotten Eſtates, which every man is apt enough to obſerve in other mens caſes; he that ſees his Neighbour decline in his Eſtate, can preſently call to mind, This was gotten by oppreſſion or deceit; yet ſo ſottiſh are we, ſo bewitcht with the love of gain, that he that makes this obſervation, can ſeldom turn it to his own uſe, is never the leſs greedy, or unjuſt himſelf for that vengeance he diſcerns upon others.

It ruines the Soul Eternally.

10. But alas! if thou couldeſt be ſure that thy unjuſt poſſeſſions ſhould not be torn from thee, yet when thou remembreſt, how dear thou muſt pay for them in another world, thou haſt little reaſon to brag of thy prize. Thou thinkeſt thou haſt been very cunning when thou haſt over-reacht thy brother; But God knows, all the while there is another over-reaching thee, and cheating thee of what is infinitely more precious, even thy Soul: The Devil herein deals with thee as Fiſhers uſe to do; thoſe that will catch a great Fiſh, will bait the hook with a leſs, and ſo the great one coming with greedineſs to devour that, is himſelf taken: So thou that art gaping to ſwallow up thy poor brother, art thy ſelf made a prey to that great devourer. And alas! what will it eaſe thee in Hell that thou haſt left wealth

behind thee upon Earth, when thou ſhalt there want that, which the meaneſt beggar here enjoys, even a drop of water to cool thy tongue; Conſider this, and from henceforth reſolve to employ all that pains and diligence thou haſt uſed to deceive others, in reſcuing thy ſelf from the frauds of the grand deceiver.

The neceſſity of Reſtitution.

11. To this purpoſe it is abſolutely neceſſary, that thou make reſtitution to all whom thou haſt wronged: For as long as thou keepeſt any thing of the unjuſt gain, 'tis, as it were, an earneſt-penny from the Devil, which gives him full right to thy Soul. But perhaps it may be ſaid, it will not in all caſes be poſſible to make reſtitution to the wronged party, peradventure he may be dead; in that caſe then make it to his Heirs, to whom his right deſcends. But it may farther be objected, That he that hath long gone on in a courſe of fraud, may have injured many, that he cannot now remember, and many, that he hath no means of finding out: In this caſe all I can adviſe is this: Firſt to be as diligent as is poſſible, both in recalling to mind who they were, and endeavouring to find them out; and when, after all thy care, that proves impoſſible, let thy Reſtitutions be made to the poor, and that they may not be made by halfs, be as careful as thou canſt to reckon every the leaſt mite of unjuſt gain: But when that cannot exactly be done, as 'tis ſure it cannot by thoſe who have multiplied the Acts of fraud, yet even there let them make ſome general meaſures, whereby to proportion their reſtitution: As for example, a Tradeſman that cannot remember how much he hath cheated in every ſingle parcel, yet may poſſibly gueſs in the groſs whether he have uſually over-reacht to the value of a third, or a fourth part of the wares, and then what proportion ſoever he thinks he has ſo defrauded, the ſame proportion let him now give out of that Eſtate he hath raiſed by his Trade: But herein it concerns every man to deal uprightly, as in the preſence of God, and not to make advantage of his own forgetfulneſs, to the cutting ſhort of the Reſtitution, but rather go on the other hand, and be ſure rather to give too much, than too little. If he do happen to give ſomewhat over, he need not grudge the charge of ſuch a ſin offering, and 'tis ſure he will not, if he do heartily deſire an atonement. Many other difficulties there may be in this buſineſs of reſtitution, which will not be foreſeen, and ſo cannot now be particularly ſpoke to; but the more of thoſe there are, the greater horrour ought men to have of running into the ſin of injuſtice, which it will be ſo difficult, if not impoſſible for them to repair, and the more careful ought they to be to mortifie that which is the root of all injuſtice, to wit, Covetouſneſs.

SUNDAY XIII.

Of Falſe Reports, Falſe-witneſs, Slanders, Whiſperings; Of Scoffing for Infirmities, Calamities, Sins, &c. Of poſitive Juſtice, Truth. Of Lying. Of Envy and Detraction. Of Gratitude, &c.

His credit.

Sect. 1. THE Fourth Branch of Negative Juſtice concerns the Credit of our Neighbours, which we are not to leſſen, or impair by any means, particularly not by falſe Reports. Of falſe reports there may be two ſorts, the one is when a man ſays ſomething of his Neighbour, which he directly knows to be falſe, the other when poſſibly he has ſome ſlight ſurmiſe, or jealouſie of the thing, but that upon ſuch weak grounds, that 'tis as likely to be falſe as true. In either of theſe caſes, there is a great guilt lies upon the reporter. That there doth ſo in the firſt of them, no body will doubt, every one acknowledging that it is the greateſt baſeneſs to invent a lye of another; but there is as little reaſon to queſtion the other, for he that reports a thing as a truth, which is but uncertain, is a Lyar alſo; or if he do not report it as a certainty, but only as a probability, yet then though he be not guilty of the lye, yet he is of the injuſtice of robbing his Neighbour of his credit; for there is ſuch an aptneſs in Men to believe ill of others, that any the lighteſt jealouſie will, if once it be ſpread abroad, ſerve for that purpoſe; and ſure it is a moſt horrible injuſtice upon every ſlight ſurmiſe and fancy to hazard the bringing ſo great an evil upon another; eſpecially when it is conſidered, that thoſe ſurmiſes commonly ſpring rather from ſome cenſoriouſneſs, peeviſhneſs, or malice in the ſurmiſer, than from any real fault in the perſon ſo ſuſpected.

2. The manner of ſpreading theſe falſe reports of both kinds, is not always the ſame; ſometimes it is more open and avowed, ſometimes more cloſe and private: the open is many times by falſe witneſs before the Courts of Juſtice: and this not only hurts a Man in his credit, but in other reſpects alſo: 'tis the delivering him up to the puniſhment of the Law, and according to the nature of the crime pretended, does him more or leſs miſchief; but if it be of the higheſt kind, it may concern his Life, as we ſee it did in *Naboth's* caſe, 1 *Kings* 21. How great and crying a ſin it is in this reſpect, as alſo in that of the perjury, you may learn from what hath been ſaid of both thoſe ſins. I am now to conſider it only, as it touches the Credit; and to that it is a moſt grievous wound, thus to have a crime publickly witneſſed againſt one, and ſuch as is ſcarce curable by any thing that can afterwards be done to clear him, and therefore whoever is guilty of this, doth a moſt outragious injuſtice to his Neighbour; this is that which is expreſly forbidden in the Ninth Commandment, and was by God appointed to be puniſht by the inflicting of the very ſame ſuffering upon him, which his falſe Teſtimony aimed to bring upon the other, *Deuteronomy* 19. 16. *Falſe witneſs.*

3. The ſecond open way of ſpreading theſe reports, is by a publick and common declaring of them; though not before the Magiſtrate, as in the other caſe, yet in all companies, and before ſuch as are likely to carry it farther, and this is uſually done with bitter railings and reproaches, it being an ordinary Art of ſlanderers, to revile thoſe whom they ſlander, that ſo by the ſharpneſs of the accuſation, they may have the greater impreſſion on the minds of the hearers: this both in reſpect of the ſlander, and the railing is a high injury, and both of them ſuch, as debar the committers from Heaven; thus *Pſalm* 15. where the upright man is deſcribed, that ſhall have his part there, this is one ſpecial thing, verſe 3. *That he ſlandereth not his Neighbour.* And for railing, the Apoſtle in ſeveral places reckons it amongſt thoſe works of the fleſh, which are to ſhut men out both from the Church here by excommunication, as you may ſee, 1 *Cor.* 15. 11. and from the Kingdom of God hereafter, as it is 1 Cor. 6. 10. *Publick ſlanders.*

4. The other more cloſe and private way of ſpreading ſuch reports is that of the Whiſperer, he that goes about from one to another, and privately vents his ſlanders, not out of an intent by that means to make them leſs publick, but rather more: this trick of delivering them by way of ſecret, being the way to make them both more believed, and more ſpoken of too; for he that receives ſuch a tale, as a ſecret from one, thinks to pleaſe ſome body elſe, by delivering it as a ſecret to him alſo; and ſo it paſſes from *Whiſpering.*

one hand to another, till at laſt it ſpread over a whole Town. This ſort of ſlander is of all others the moſt dangerous, for he works in the dark, ties all he ſpeaks to, not to own him as the author; ſo that whereas in the more publick accuſations, the party may have ſome means of clearing himſelf and detecting his accuſer, here he ſhall have no poſſibility of that, the ſlander, like a ſecret poyſon, works incurable effects, before ever the man diſcern it. This ſin of whiſpering is by S. *Paul* mentioned among thoſe great crimes, which are the effects of a reprobate mind, *Rom.* 1. 29. It is indeed one of the moſt incurable wounds of this ſword of the tongue: the very bane and peſt of humane ſociety: and that which not only robs ſingle perſons of their good names, but oftentimes whole families, nay, publick Societies of men of their peace; what ruines, what confuſions hath this one ſin wrought in the world? 'tis *Solomon's* obſervation, *Prov.* 18. 28. that a *Whiſperer ſeparateth chief friends*, and ſure one may truly ſay of tongues thus imployed, that they are *ſet on fire of Hell*, as S. *James* ſaith, Chap. 3. 6.

Several ſteps towards this ſin.

5. This is ſuch a guilt that we are to beware of all the degrees of approach to it, of which there are ſeveral ſteps; the firſt is the giving ear to, and cheriſhing of thoſe that come with ſlanders; for they that entertain and receive them, encourage them in the practice; for as our common Proverb ſays, If there were no Receivers, there would be no Thief; ſo if there were none that would give an ear to tales, there would be no Tale-bearers. A ſecond ſtep is, the giving too eaſie credit to them, for this helps them to attain part of their end. They deſire to get a general ill opinion of ſuch a man, but the way of doing it muſt be by cauſing it, firſt, in particular men: and if thou ſuffer them to do it in thee, they have ſo far proſpered in their aim. And for thy own part thou doſt a great injuſtice to thy Neighbour, to believe ill of him without a juſt ground, which the accuſation of ſuch a perſon certainly is not. A third ſtep is the reporting to others, what is thus told thee; by which thou makeſt thy ſelf directly a party in the ſlander, and after thou haſt unjuſtly withdrawn from thy Neighbour thy own good opinion, endeavoureſt to rob him alſo of that of others. This is very little below the guilt of the firſt whiſperer, and tends as much to the ruine of our Neighbour's credit. And theſe ſeveral degrees have ſo cloſe a dependance one upon another, that it will be very hard for him that allows himſelf the firſt, to eſcape the other, and indeed he that can take delight to hear his Neighbour defamed, may well be preſumed of ſo malicious a humour, that it is not likely he ſhould ſtick at ſpreading the ſlander. He therefore that will preſerve his innocence in this matter, muſt never in the leaſt degree cheriſh or countenance any that brings theſe falſe reports. And it is not leſs neceſſary to his peace, than to his innocency; for he that once entertains them, muſt never expect quiet, but ſhall be continually incited, and ſtirred up even againſt his neareſt and deareſt relations; ſo that this whiſperer, and ſlanderer is to be lookt on by all as a common Enemy, he being ſo as well to thoſe to whom, as of whom he ſpeaks.

Deſpiſing and ſcoffing.

6. But beſides this groſſer way of ſlandering, there is another, whereby we may impair and leſſen the credit of our Neighbour, and that is by contempt and deſpiſing, one common effect whereof is Scoffing and Deriding him. This is very injurious to a man's reputation. For the generality of men do rather take up opinions upon truſt, than judgment; and therefore if they ſee a man deſpiſed and ſcorned, they will be apt to do the like. But beſides this effect of it, there is a preſent injuſtice in the very

act of deſpiſing and ſcorning others. There are ordinarily but three things which are made the occaſions of it, (unleſs it be with ſuch, with whom Vertue and Godlineſs are made the moſt reproachful things, and ſuch deſpiſing is not only an injury to our Neighbour, but even to God himſelf, for whoſe ſake it is, that he is ſo deſpiſed) thoſe three are, firſt, the Infirmities, ſecondly, the Calamities, thirdly, the Sins of a Man, and each of theſe are very far from being ground of our triumphing over him.

7. Firſt, for Infirmities, be they either of Body or Mind, the deformity and unhandſomneſs of the one, or the weakneſs and folly of the other, they are things out of his power to help, they are not his faults, but the wiſe diſpenſations of the great Creator, who beſtows the excellencies of Body and Mind as he pleaſes; and therefore to ſcorn a Man, becauſe he hath them not, is in effect to reproach God who gave them not to him.

For Infirmities.

8. So alſo for the Calamities and Miſeries that befal a Man, be it want or ſickneſs, or whatever elſe, theſe alſo come by the Providence of God, who raiſeth up and pulleth down, as ſeems good to him, and it belongs not to us to judge, what are the motives to him to do ſo, as many do, who upon any affliction that befals another, are preſently concluding that ſure it is ſome extraordinary guilt, which pulls this upon him, though they have no particular to lay to his charge. This raſh judgment our Saviour reproves in the *Jews*, *Luk.* 13. where on occaſion of the extraordinary ſufferings of the *Galilæans*, he asks them verſe 2, 3. *Suppoſe ye that theſe Galilæans were ſinners above all the Galilæans, becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things? I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* When we ſee God's hand heavy upon others, it is no part of our buſineſs to judge them, but our ſelves, and by repentance to prevent, what our own ſins have deſerved. But to reproach and revile any that are in affliction, is that barbarous cruelty, taken notice of by the *Pſalmiſt*, as the height of wickedneſs, *Pſalm* 69. 26. *They perſecute him whom thou haſt ſmitten, and they talk to the grief of them whom thou haſt wounded:* In all the miſeries of others, compaſſion becomes a debt to them; how unjuſt are they then, that inſtead of paying them that debt, afflict them with ſcorn and reproach?

For Calamities.

9. Nay, the very ſins of Men, though, as they have more of their wills in them, they may ſeem more to deſerve reproach, yet certainly they alſo oblige us to the former duty of compaſſion, and that in the higheſt degree, as being the things, which of all others make a Man the moſt miſerable. In all theſe caſes, if we conſider how ſubject we are to the like our ſelves, and that it is only God's mercy to us, by which we are preſerved from the worſt that any man elſe is under, it will ſurely better become us to look up to him with thankfulneſs, than down on them with contempt and deſpiſing. Thus you ſee the direct injuſtice of ſcorning and contemning our brethren, to which when that other is added, which naturally follows, as a conſequent of this, to wit, the begetting the like contempt in others, there can ſure be no doubt of its being a great and horrible injuſtice to our Neighbour in reſpect of his Credit.

For Sins.

10. Now how great the injury of deſtroying a Man's Credit is, may be meaſured by theſe two things; firſt, The value of the thing he is robb'd of, and ſecondly, The difficulty of making reparations. For the firſt, 'tis commonly known, that a Man's Good Name is a thing he holds moſt precious, oftentimes dearer than his Life, as we ſee by the hazards men ſometimes run to preſerve even a miſtaken reputation; but 'tis ſure, it is that, which hath even by ſober Men been eſteemed one of the greateſt happineſſes of Life: And to ſome ſort of Men, ſuch eſpecially as ſubſiſt by deal-

Deſtroying the Credi a great injury.

ings in the world, 'tis ſo neceſſary, that it may well be reckoned as the means of their livelihood, and then ſure, 'tis no ſlight matter to rob a Man of what is thus valuable to him.

and irreparable.

11. Secondly, The difficulty of making reparations encreaſeth the injury, and that is ſuch in this caſe of defamation, that I may rather call it an impoſſibility, than a difficulty. For when Men are poſſeſt of an ill opinion of a Perſon, 'tis no eaſie matter to work it out: ſo that the ſlanderer is herein like a young Conjurer, that raiſes a Devil he knows not how to lay again. Nay, ſuppoſe Men were generally as willing to lay down ill conceits of their Neighbours, as they are to take them up, yet how is it poſſible for him that makes even the moſt publick Recantation of his ſlander, to be ſure that every Man that hath come to the hearing of the one, ſhall do ſo of the other alſo? And if there be but one Perſon that doth not, (as probably there will be many) then is the reparation ſtill ſhort of the injury.

Yet every guilty perſon muſt do all he can to repair the injury.

12. This conſideration is very fit to make Men afraid of doing this wrong to their Neighbour; but let it not be made uſe of to excuſe thoſe that have already done the wrong, from endeavouring to make the beſt reparations they can; for though 'tis odds, it will not equal the injury, yet let them however do what they are able towards it. And this is ſo neceſſary towards the obtaining pardon of the ſin, that none muſt expect the one that do not perform the other. Whoſoever therefore ſets himſelf to repent of his faults of this kind muſt by all prudent means endeavour to reſtore his Neighbour to that degree of credit he hath deprived him of; and if that be not to be done without bringing the ſhame upon himſelf of confeſſing publickly the ſlander, he muſt rather ſubmit to that than be wanting to this neceſſary part of juſtice, which he owes to the wronged party.

Juſtice in the thoughts.

13. Thus I have gone through theſe four branches of Negative Juſtice to our Neighbour; wherein we muſt yet further obſerve, that this Juſtice binds us, not only in reſpect of our words and actions, but of our very thoughts and affections alſo; we are not only forbid to hurt, but to hate; not only reſtrained from bringing any of theſe evils forementioned upon him, but we muſt not ſo much as wiſh them before, nor delight in them after they are befallen him: we muſt take no pleaſure either in the ſin of his Soul, or hurt of his Body: we muſt not envy him any good thing he enjoys, nor ſo much as wiſh to poſſeſs our ſelves of it; neither will it ſuffice us, that we ſo bridle our tongue, that we neither ſlander nor revile, if we have that malice in our hearts, which makes us wiſh his diſcredit; or rejoyce when we find it procured, though we have no hand in the procuring it. This is the peculiar property of God's Laws that they reach to the Heart, whereas Mens can extend only to the Words and Actions; and the reaſon is clear, becauſe he is the only Law-giver, that can ſee what is in the heart; therefore if there were the perfecteſt innocency in our tongue and hands, yet if there be not this purity of Heart, it will never ſerve to acquit us before him. The counſel therefore of *Solomon* is excellent, *Prov.* 4. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the iſſues of life.* Let us ſtrictly guard that, ſo that no malicious unjuſt thought enter there; and that not only as it may be the means of betraying us to the groſſer act, but alſo as it is in it ſelf ſuch a pollution in God's ſight, as will unfit us for the bleſſed viſion of God, whom none but the pure in heart have promiſe of ſeeing, *Matth.* 5. 8. *Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God.*

14.

Poſitive Juſtice.

14. I come now to ſpeak of the poſitive part of Juſtice, which is the yeilding to every man that which by any kind of right he may challenge from us. Of theſe dues there are ſome that are general to all mankind, others that are reſtrained within ſome certain conditions and qualities of men, and become due only by virtue of thoſe qualifications.

Speaking Truth a due to all men.

15. Of the firſt ſort, that is, thoſe that are due to all men, we may reckon firſt the ſpeaking Truth, which is a common debt we owe to all mankind; ſpeech is given us as the inſtrument of intercourſe and ſociety one with another, the means of diſcovering the mind which otherwiſe lies hid and concealed, ſo that were it not for this, our converſations would be but the ſame as of Beaſts: Now this being intended for the good and advantage of mankind, 'tis a due to it, that it be uſed to that purpoſe; but he that Lyes, is ſo far from paying that debt, that on the contrary he makes his ſpeech the means of injuring and deceiving him he ſpeaks to.

Lying expreſly forbidden in Scripture.

16. There might much be ſaid to ſhew the ſeveral ſorts of Obligations we lye under to ſpeak truth to all men; but ſuppoſing I write to Chriſtians, I need not inſiſt upon any other, than the Commands we have of it in Scripture: Thus *Eph.* 4. 25. the Apoſtle commands that *putting away lying, they ſpeak every man truth with his Neighbour*: And again, *Col.* 3. 9. *Lye not one to another*: And *Prov.* 6. 17. a lying tongue is mentioned as one of thoſe things that are abominations to the Lord. Yea, ſo much doth he hate a lye, that it is not the moſt pious and religious end that can reconcile him to it; the man that lyes though in a zeal to God's glory, ſhall yet be judged as a ſinner, *Rom.* 3. 7. What ſhall then become of thoſe multitudes of men that lye on quite other ends? Some out of malice, to miſchief others; ſome out of covetouſneſs to defraud their Neighbours; ſome out of pride, to ſet themſelves out; and ſome out of fear, to avoid danger, or hide a fault. But of a yet ſtranger ſort than all theſe are thoſe that do it without any diſcernible temptation, that will tell lyes by way of ſtory, take pleaſure in telling incredible things, from which themſelves reap nothing but the reputation of impertinent lyars.

The great commonneſs and folly of this ſin.

17. Among theſe divers kinds of falſhood, Truth is become ſuch a rarity among us, that it is a moſt difficult matter, to find ſuch a Man as *David* deſcribes, *Pſalm* 15. 2. *That ſpeaketh the truth from his heart.* Men have ſo glibbed their tongues to lying, that they do it familiarly upon any or no occaſion, never thinking that they are obſerved either by God or Man. But they are extreamly deceived in both; for there is ſcarce any ſin (that is at all endeavoured to be hid) which is more diſcernible even to Men: They that have a cuſtom of lying, ſeldom fail (be their memory never ſo good) at ſome time or other to betray themſelves; and when they do, there is no ſort of ſin meets with greater ſcorn and reproach; a Lyar being by all accounted a title of the greateſt infamy and ſhame. But as for God, 'tis madneſs to hope that all their Arts can diſguiſe them from him, who needs none of thoſe caſual ways of diſcovery which Men do, but ſees the heart, and ſo knows at the very inſtant of ſpeaking, the falſhood of what is ſaid: And then by his Title of the God of Truth, is tied not only to hate, but puniſh it: And accordingly you ſee, *Rev.* 22. that the lyars are in the number of thoſe that are ſhut out of the new *Jeruſalem*; and not only ſo, but alſo have their *part in the lake that burneth with Fire and Brimſtone.* If therefore thou be not of the humour of that unjuſt Judge, Chriſt ſpeaks of, *Luke* 18. 2. *who neither feared God, nor regarded man*, thou muſt reſolve on this part of Juſtice, the putting away lying, which is abhorred by both.

18. A

Courteous behaviour a due to all men.

18. A ſecond thing we owe to all is Humanity and Courteſie of behaviour, contrary to that ſullen churliſhneſs we find ſpoken of in *Nabal*, who was of ſuch a temper, *that a man could not ſpeak to him*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 17. There is ſure ſo much of reſpect due to the very nature of Mankind, that no accidental advantage of Wealth or Honour, which one Man hath above another, can acquit him from that debt to it, even in the perſon of the meaneſt; and therefore that crabbed and harſh behaviour to any that bears but the form of a Man, is an injuſtice to that nature he partakes of. And when we conſider how much that nature is dignified by the Son of God his taking it upon him, the obligation to reverence it is yet greater, and conſequently the ſin of thus contemning it.

Not payed by the proud man.

19. This is the common guilt of all proud and haughty perſons, who are ſo buſie in admiring themſelves, that they over-look all that is valuable in others, and ſo think they owe not ſo much as common civility to other Men, whilſt they ſet up themſelves, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did his Image, *to be worſhipped of all.* This is ſure very contrary to what the Apoſtle exhorts, *Rom.* 12. 10. *In honour prefer one another.* And again, *Phil.* 2. 4. *Look not every man on his own things, but every man alſo on the things of others*; and let ſuch remember the ſentence of our bleſſed Saviour, *Luk.* 14. 11. *He that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed, and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted,* which we often find made good to us, in the ſtrange down-falls of proud Men. And it is no wonder, for this ſin makes both God and Men our enemies; God, as the Scripture every where teſtifies, abhors it, and all that are guilty of it, and Men are by means of it uſed ſo contemptuouſly and unkindly by us, that they are by nothing more provoked againſt us; and then whom God and Man thus reſiſt, who ſhall ſecure and uphold?

Meekneſs a due to all men.

20. A third thing we owe to all is Meekneſs; that is, ſuch a Patience and Gentleneſs towards all, as may bridle that mad paſſion of Anger, which is not only very uneaſie to our ſelves, as hath already been ſhewed, but alſo very miſchievous to our Neighbours, as the many outrages, that are oft committed in it, do abundantly teſtifie. That this duty of Meekneſs is to be extended to all Men, there is no doubt; for the Apoſtle in exprſs words commands it, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 14. *Be patient towards all men,* and that it ſhould ſeem, in ſpite of all provocation to the contrary, for the very next words are, *See that none render evil for evil, or railing for railing*; and *Timothy* is commanded to exerciſe this Meekneſs even towards them who oppoſe themſelves againſt the Doctrine of the Goſpel, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. which was a caſe, wherein ſome heat would probably have been allowed, if it might have been in any.

Brawling very inſufferable.

21. This Vertue of Meekneſs is ſo neceſſary to the preſerving the Peace of the World, that it is no wonder, that Chriſt, who came to plant Peace among Men, ſhould enjoyn Meekneſs to all. I am ſure the contrary effects of rage and anger are every where diſcernible; it breeds diſquiet in Kingdoms, in Neighbourhoods, in Families, and even between the neareſt relations; 'tis ſuch a humour, that *Solomon* warns us never to enter a friendſhip with a Man that is of it, *Prov.* 22. 24. *Make no friendſhip with an angry man, and with a furious man thou ſhalt not go.* It makes a Man unfit to be either friend or companion, and indeed makes one inſufferable to all that have to do with him, as we are again taught by *Solomon*, *Prov.* 21. 19. Where he prefers the *dwelling in a wilderneſs, rather than with a contentious and angry woman*; and yet a Woman has ordinarily only that one weapon of the tongue to offend with. Indeed to any that have not the ſame unquietneſs of humour, there can ſcarce be a greater uneaſineſs, than to converſe

verſe with thoſe that have it, though it never proceed farther than words. How great this ſin is, we may judge by what our Saviour ſays of it, *Matth.* 5. where there are ſeveral degrees of puniſhment allotted to ſeveral degrees of it, but alas we daily out-go that which he there ſets as the higheſt ſtep of this ſin; the calling, *Thou fool,* is a modeſt ſort of reviling, compared with thoſe multitudes of bitter reproaches we uſe in our rages.

It leads to that great ſin of curſing.

22. Nay, we often go yet higher; reproaches ſerve not our turn, but we muſt curſe too. How common is it to hear Men uſe the horridſt execrations and curſings upon every the ſlighteſt cauſe of diſpleaſure? Nay, perhaps without any cauſe at all; ſo utterly have we forgot the rule of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 12. 14. *Bleſs and curſe not?* Yea, the precept of our bleſſed Saviour himſelf, *Matth.* 5. 44. *Pray for thoſe that deſpitefully uſe you.* Chriſt bids us pray for thoſe who do us all injury, and we are often curſing thoſe who do us none. This is a kind of ſaying our prayers backward indeed, which is ſaid to be part of the Ceremony the Devil uſes at the making of a Witch, and we have in this caſe alſo reaſon to look on it, as a means of bringing us into acquaintance and league with that accurſed ſpirit here, and to a perpetual abiding with him hereafter. 'Tis the language of Hell, which can never fit us to be Citizens of the New *Jeruſalem,* but marks us out for inhabitants of that land of darkneſs. I conclude this with the advice of the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 4. 31. *Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-ſpeaking be put away from you, with all malice.*

Particular dues.

23. Having ſpoken thus far of thoſe common dues, wherein all Men are concerned and have a right, I am now to proceed to thoſe other ſorts of dues which belong to particular perſons, by vertue of ſome ſpecial qualification. Theſe qualifications may be of three kinds, that of Excellency, that of Want, and that of Relation.

A reſpect due to men of extraordinary gifts.

24. By that of Excellency, I mean any extraordinary gifts, or endowments of a perſon; ſuch as Wiſdom, Learning, and the like, but eſpecially Grace. Theſe being the ſingular gifts of God, have a great value and reſpect due to them, wherſoever they are to be found; and this we muſt readily pay by a willing and glad acknowledgment of thoſe his gifts in any he has beſtowed them on, and bearing them a reverence and reſpect, anſwerable thereunto, and not out of an over-weening of our own excellencies, deſpiſe and undervalue thoſe of others, as they do who will yeild nothing to be reaſon, but what themſelves ſpeak, nor any thing piety, but what agrees with their own practice.

We are not to envy them.

25. Alſo we muſt not envy or grudge that they have thoſe gifts, for that is not only an injuſtice to them, but injurious alſo to God who gave them, as it is at large ſet forth in the parable of the labourers, *Matth* 20. where he asks them who grumbled at the Maſter's bounty to others, *Is it not Lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is thine eye evil becauſe mine is good?* This envying at God's goodneſs to others, is in effect a murmuring againſt God, who thus diſpoſes it; neither can there be a greater, and more direct oppoſition againſt him, than for me to hate and wiſh ill to a Man, for no other reaſon, but becauſe God has loved and done well to him. And then in reſpect of the Man, 'tis the moſt unreaſonable thing in the World, to love him the leſs, meerly becauſe he has thoſe good qualities, for which I ought to love him more.

Nor detract from them.

26. Neither muſt we detract from the excellencies of others, we muſt not ſeek to eclipſe or darken them by denying either the kinds or degrees of them, by that means to take off that eſteem which is due to them, This ſin of detraction is generally the effect of the former, of envy; he that envies

vies a Man's worth, will be apt to do all he can to leſſen it in the opinions of others, and to that purpoſe will either ſpeak ſlightly of his excellencies, or if they be ſo apparent, that he knows not how to cloud them, he will try if he can by reporting ſome either real, or feigned infirmity of his, take off from the value of the other, and ſo by caſting in ſome dead flies, as the Wiſe man ſpeaks, *Eccleſ.* 10. 1. ſtrive to *corrupt the ſavour of the ointment.* This is a great injuſtice, and directly contrary to that duty we owe, of acknowledging and reverencing the gifts of God in our brethren.

The folly of both thoſe ſins.

27. And both thoſe ſins of envy and Detraction do uſually prove as great follies, as wickedneſs; the Envy conſtantly brings pain and torment to a Man's ſelf, whereas if he could but chearfully and gladly look on thoſe good things of anothers, he could never fail to be the better for them himſelf; the very pleaſure of ſeeing them would be ſome advantage to him: But beſides that thoſe gifts of his brother may be many ways helpful to him; his wiſdom and learning may give him inſtruction, his piety and vertue, example, &c. But all this the envious Man loſeth, and hath nothing in exchange for it, but a continual fretting, and gnawing of heart.

28. And then for Detraction, that can hardly be ſo managed, but it will be found out; he that is ſtill putting in Caveats againſt Mens good thoughts of others, will quickly diſcover himſelf to do it out of Envy, and then that will be ſure to leſſen their eſteem of himſelf, but not of thoſe he envies, it being a ſort of bearing teſtimony to thoſe excellencies, that he thinks them worth the envying.

A reſpect due to men in regard of their ranks and qualities.

29. What hath been ſaid of the value and reſpect due to thoſe excellencies of the mind, may in a lower degree be applied to the outward advantages of honour, greatneſs and the like. Theſe, though they are not of equal value with the former (and ſuch for which no Man is to prize himſelf) yet in regard that theſe degrees and diſtinctions of Men are by God's wiſe providence diſpoſed for the better ordering of the World, there is ſuch a civil reſpect due to thoſe, to whom God hath diſpens'd them, as may beſt preſerve that order, for which they were intended. Therefore all Inferiours are to behave themſelves to their Superiours with modeſty and reſpect, and not by a rude boldneſs confound that order which it hath pleaſed God to ſet in the world, but according as our Church-Catechiſm teaches, *Order themſelves lowly and reverently to all their betters.* And here the former caution againſt Envy comes in moſt ſeaſonably; theſe outward advantages being things, of which generally men have more taſt, than of the other, and therefore will be more apt to envy and repine to ſee others exceed them therein; to this therefore all the former conſiderations againſt Envy will be very proper, and the more neceſſary to be made uſe of, by how much the temptation is in this caſe to moſt minds the greater.

Dues to thoſe that are in any ſort of want.

30. The ſecond qualification is that of want; whoever is in diſtreſs for any thing, wherewith I can ſupply him, that diſtreſs of his makes it a duty in me ſo to ſupply him, and this in all kinds of wants. Now the ground of its being a duty is, that God hath given Men abilities not only for their own uſe, but for the advantage and benefit of others, and therefore what is thus given for their uſe, becomes a debt to them, whenever their need requires it. Thus he that is ignorant and wants knowledge, is to be inſtructed by him that hath it, and this is one ſpecial end why that knowledge is given him; *The tongue of the learned is given to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon, Eſay* 50. 4. He that is in ſadneſs and affliction, is to be comforted by him that is himſelf in chearfulneſs. This we ſee *S Paul* makes the end of God's comforting him, that he *might be able to comfort them that are in any trouble,*

trouble, 2 *Cor.* 1. 4. He that is in any courſe of ſin, and wants reprehenſion and counſel, muſt have that want ſupplied to him by thoſe who have ſuch abilities and opportunities, as may make it likely to do good. That this is a juſtice we owe to our Neighbour, appears plainly by that Text, *Levit.* 19. 17. *Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, thou ſhalt in any wiſe reprove him, and not ſuffer ſin upon him*; where we are under the ſame obligation to reprove him, that we are not to hate him. He that lies under any ſlander, or unjuſt defamation, is to be defended and cleared by him that knows his innocence, or elſe he makes himſelf guilty of the ſlander, becauſe he neglects to do that which may remove it; and how great an injuſtice that of ſlandering our Neighbour is, I have already ſhewed.

To the poor.

31. Laſtly, He that is in poverty and need, muſt be relieved by him that is in plenty; and he is bound to it, not only in Charity but even in Juſtice. *Solomon* calls it a due, *Prov.* 3. 27. *Withhold not good from him to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it:* And what that good is, he explains in the very next verſe: *Say not to thy Neighbour, Go and come again, and to morrow I will give, when thou haſt it by thee.* It ſeems 'tis the withholding a due, ſo much as to defer giving to our poor Neighbour. And we find God did among the *Jews* ſeparate a certain portion of every Man's increaſe to the uſe of the Poor, a Tenth every third year (which is all one with a Thirtieth part every Year,) *Deut.* 14. 28, 29. And this was to be paid, not as a Charity or Liberality, but as a debt, they were unjuſt, if they withheld it. And ſurely we have no reaſon to think, that Chriſtian Juſtice is ſunk ſo much below the Jewiſh, that either nothing at all, or a leſs proportion is now required of us. I wiſh our practice were but at all anſwerable to our obligation in this point, and then ſurely we ſhould not ſee ſo many *Lazarus*'s lie unrelieved at our Doors, they having a better right to our ſuperfluities, than we our ſelves have; and then what is it but arrant robbery to beſtow that upon our vanities, nay, our ſins, which ſhould be their portion?

God withdraws thoſe abilities which are not thus imployed.

32. In all the foregoing caſes he that hath ability is to look upon himſelf, as God's Steward, who hath put it into his hands to diſtribute to them that want; and therefore not to do it, is the ſame injuſtice and fraud, that it would be in any Steward to purſe up that Money for his private benefit, which was intruſted to him, for the maintenance of the Family; and he that ſhall do thus, hath juſt reaſon to expect the doom of the unjuſt Steward, *Luke* 16. *to be put out of his Stewardſhip*, to have thoſe abilities taken from him, which he hath ſo unfaithfully employed. And as for all the reſt, ſo particularly for that of Wealth, 'tis very commonly to be obſerved, that it is withdrawn from thoſe that thus defraud the Poor of their parts, the griping Miſer coming often by ſtrange undiſcernable ways to poverty; and no wonder, he having no title to God's Bleſſing on his heap, who does not conſecrate a part to him in his poor Members. And therefore we ſee the *Iſraelites* before they could make that challenge of God's Promiſe to bleſs them, *Deut.* 26. 15. *Look down from thy holy habitation, and bleſs thy people Iſrael*, &c. they were firſt to pay the poor Man's Tithes, *verſe* 12. without which they could lay no claim to it. This withholding *more than is meet*, as *Solomon* ſays, *Prov.* 11. 24. *tends to poverty*; and therefore as thou wouldſt play the good husband for thy ſelf, be careful to perform this juſtice according to thy ability to all that are in want.

Duties in reſpect of relation.

33. The third qualification is that of Relation, and of that there may be divers ſorts, ariſing from divers grounds, and duties anſwerable to each of them. There is firſt a Relation of a Debtor to a Creditor; and he

that ſtands in that relation to any, whether by vertue of bargain, loan or promiſe, 'tis his duty to pay juſtly what he owes, if he be able (as on the other ſide, if he be not, 'tis the Creditor's, to deal Charitably and Chriſtianly with him, and not to exact of him beyond his ability.) But I need not inſiſt on this, having already, by ſhewing you the ſin of withholding debts, inform'd you of this duty.

Gratitude to Benefactors.

34. There is alſo a relation of an obliged perſon to his Benefactor, that is, one that hath done him good, of what kind ſoever, whether Spiritual or Corporal; and the duty of that Perſon is, Firſt, Thankfulneſs, that is, a ready and hearty acknowledgment of the courteſie received: Secondly, Prayer for God's Bleſſings, and rewards upon him; and Thirdly, An endeavour, as opportunity and ability ſerves, to make returns of kindneſs, by doing good turns back again. This duty of Gratitude to Benefactors is ſo generally acknowledged by all, even the moſt barbarous and ſavageſt of Men, that he muſt have put off much of his humane Nature, that refuſes to perform it. The very *Publicans* and Sinners, as our Saviour ſays, *do good to thoſe that do good to them.*

The contrary too common.

35. Yet how many of us fail even in this? How frequent is it to ſee Men not only neglect to repay courteſies, but return injuries inſtead of them? It is too obſervable in many particulars, but in none more, than in the caſe of advice, and admonition, which is of all others, the moſt precious part of kindneſs, the realleſt good turn that can be done from one Man to another. And therefore thoſe that do this to us, ſhould be look'd on, as our prime and greateſt Benefactors. But alas! how few are there, that can find Gratitude, ſhall I ſay? nay, Patience for ſuch a courteſie? Go about to admoniſh a Man of a fault, or tell him of an Error, he preſently looks on you, as his Enemy: You are, as S. *Paul* tells the *Galatians* Chap. 4. 16. *Become his enemy, becauſe you tell him the truth*; ſuch a Pride there is in Mens hearts, that they muſt not be told of any thing amiſs, though it be with no other intent, but that they may amend it. A ſtrange madneſs this is, the ſame that it would be in a ſick Man, to fly in the face of him that comes to cure him, on a fancy that he diſparaged him in ſuppoſing him ſick; ſo that we may well ſay with the Wiſe Man, *Prov.* 12. 1. *He that hateth reproof is brutiſh.* There cannot be in the World a more unhappy temper, for it fortifies a Man in his ſins; raiſes ſuch Mounts and Bulwarks about them, that no Man can come to aſſault them, and if we may believe *Solomon*, deſtruction will not fail to attend it, *Prov.* 29 1. *He that being often reproved hardneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy.* But then again in reſpect of the admoniſher 'tis the greateſt injuſtice, I may ſay, cruelty that can be: He comes in tenderneſs and compaſſion to reſcue thee from danger; and to that purpoſe puts himſelf upon a very uneaſie task; for ſuch the general impatience Men have to admonition, hath now made it; and what a defeat, what a grief is it to him to find, that inſtead of reforming the firſt fault, thou art run into a ſecond, to wit, that of cauſleſs diſpleaſure againſt him? This is one of the worſt, and yet I doubt, the commoneſt ſort of unthankfulneſs to Benefactors, and ſo a great failing in that duty we owe to that ſort of Relation. But perhaps theſe will be lookt on as remote Relations, (yet 'tis ſure they are ſuch as challenge all that duty I have aſſigned to them) I ſhall in the next place proceed to thoſe Relations, which are by all acknowledged to be of the greateſt nearneſs.

SUNDAY XIV.

Of duty to Magiſtrates, Paſtors. Of the duty of Parents to Children, &c. *Of Childrens duty unto Parents,* &c.

Duty to Parents.

Sect. 1. THE firſt of thoſe nearer ſorts of Relations, is that of a Parent; and here it will be neceſſary to conſider the ſeveral ſorts of Parents, according to which the duty of them is to be meaſured. Thoſe are theſe Three, the Civil, the Spiritual, the Natural.

Duties to the Supreme Magiſtrate.

2. The Civil Parent is he whom God hath eſtabliſht the Supreme Magiſtrate, who by a juſt right poſſeſſes the Throne in a Nation. This is the common Father of all thoſe that are under his authority. The duty we owe to this Parent, is firſt Honour and Reverence, looking on him, as upon one, on whom God hath ſtamped much of his own power and authority, and therefore paying him all honour and eſteem, never daring upon any pretence whatſoever, *to ſpeak evil of the Ruler of our People*, Acts 23. 5.

Honour.

Tribute.

3. Secondly, Paying Tribute; This is expreſly commanded by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 13. 6. *Pay ye Tribute alſo, for they are God's Miniſters attending continually upon this very thing.* God has ſet them apart as Miniſters for the common good of the people, and therefore 'tis all juſtice, they ſhould be maintained and ſupported by them. And indeed when it is conſidered, what are the cares and troubles of that high calling, how many thorns are platted in every Crown, we have very little reaſon to envy them theſe dues; and it may truly be ſaid, there is none of their poor labouring ſubjects, that earns their living ſo hardly.

Prayers for them.

4. Thirdly, We are to pray for them: This is alſo expreſly commanded by the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 2. 2. to be done for *Kings, and for all that are in authority.* The buſineſſes of that calling are ſo weighty, the dangers and hazards of it ſo great, that they of all others need prayers for God's direction, aſſiſtance, and bleſſing, and the Prayers that are thus poured out for them, will return into our own boſoms, for the bleſſings they receive from God tend to the good of the People, to their *living a quiet and peaceable life*, as it is in the cloſe of the verſe forementioned.

Obedience.

5. Fourthly, We are to pay them Obedience, This is likewiſe ſtrictly charged by the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. *Submit your ſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governours as thoſe that are ſent by him.* We owe ſuch an Obedience to the Supreme Power, that whoever is authorized by him, we are to ſubmit to; and S. *Paul* likewiſe is moſt full to this purpoſe, *Rom.* 13. 1. *Let every ſoul be ſubject to the higher powers:* And again, ver. 2. *Whoſoever reſiſteth the powers, reſiſteth the Ordinance of God.* And 'tis obſervable that theſe Precepts were given at a time, when thoſe powers were Heathens, and cruel Perſecutors of Chriſtianity; to ſhew us, that no pretence of the wickedneſs of our Rulers can free us of this duty. An Obedience we muſt pay either Active or Paſſive: The Active in the caſe of all Lawful Commands; that is, whenever the Magiſtrate commands ſomething, which is not contrary to ſome Command of God, we are then bound to act according to that Command of the Magiſtrate, to do the things he requires. But when he enjoyns any thing contrary to what God hath commanded, we are not then to pay him this Active Obedience; we may, nay, we muſt refuſe thus to act (yet here we muſt be very well aſſured that the thing is ſo contrary, and not pretend Conſcience for a cloak of ſtubbornneſs) we are in that caſe to *obey God rather than man.* But

even this is a ſeaſon for the Paſſive Obedience, we muſt patiently ſuffer, what he inflicts on us for ſuch refuſal, and not to ſecure our ſelves, riſe up againſt him. *For who can ſtretch his hand againſt the Lord' anointed, and be guiltleſs?* ſays *David* to *Abiſhai*, 1 *Sam.* 26. 9. and that at a time when *David* was under a great perſecution from *Saul*, nay, had alſo the aſſurance of the Kingdom after him; and S. *Paul's* ſentence in this caſe is moſt heavy, *Rom.* 13. 2. *They that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.* Here is very ſmall encouragement to any to riſe up againſt the lawful Magiſtrate, for though they ſhould ſo far proſper here, as to ſecure themſelves from him by this means, yet there is a King of Kings from whom no power can ſhelter them, and this damnation in the cloſe will prove a ſad prize of their Victories. What is on the other ſide the duty of the Magiſtrate to the people will be in vain to mention here, none of that rank being like to read this Treatiſe, and it being very uſeleſs for the people to enquire, what is the duty of their Supreme, wherein the moſt are already much better read, than in their own; it may ſuffice them to know, that whatſoevar his duty is, or however performed, he is accountable to none but God, and no failing of his part can warrant them to fail of theirs.

Duties to our Paſtors.

6. The ſecond ſort of Parents are the Spiritual; that is, the Miniſters of the Word, whether ſuch as be Governours in the Church, or others under them, who are to perform the ſame offices to our Souls, that our natural Parents do to our Bodies. Thus S. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, that in *Chriſt Jeſus he had begotten them through the Goſpel*, 1 Cor. 4. 15. and the *Galatians*, Chap. 4. 19. That he *travails in birth of them, till Chriſt be formed in them:* And again, 1 *Cor.* 3. 2. *He had fed them with milk*; that is, ſuch Doctrines as were agreeable to that infant ſtate of Chriſtianity they were then in; but he had *ſtronger meat for them of full age*, *Heb.* 5. 14. All theſe are the offices of a Parent, and therefore they that perform them to us, may well be accounted as ſuch.

Love.

7. Our duty to theſe is firſt to love them, to bear them that kindneſs, which belongs to thoſe who do us the greateſt benefits. This is required by S. *Paul*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 13. *I beſeech you brethren, mark them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you, and eſteem them very highly in love for their works ſake.* The work is ſuch as ought in all reaſon to procure them love, it being of the higheſt advantage to us.

Eſteem.

8. Secondly, 'Tis our duty to value and eſteem them, as we ſee in the Text now mentioned; and ſurely this is moſt reaſonable, if we conſider either the nature of their work, or who it is that employs them. The nature of their work is of all others the moſt excellent. We uſe to value other profeſſions proportionably to the dignity and worth of the things they deal in. Now ſurely there is no Merchandize of equal worth with a Soul, and this is their Traffick, reſcuing precious Souls from perdition; and if we conſider further, who it is that employs them, it yet adds to the reverence due to them. They are *Ambaſſadors for Chriſt*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. and Ambaſſadors are by the Laws of all Nations to be uſed with a reſpect anſwerable to the quality of thoſe that ſend them. Therefore Chriſt tells his Diſciples, when he ſends them out to preach, *He that deſpiſeth you deſpiſeth me, and he that deſpiſeth me deſpiſeth him that ſent me*, *Luke* 10. 16. It ſeems there is more depends on the deſpiſing of Miniſters, than Men ordinarily conſider, 'tis the deſpiſing of God and Chriſt both. Let thoſe think of this, who make it their paſtime and ſport to affront and deride this calling. And let thoſe alſo, who dare preſume to exerciſe the offices of it, without being lawfully called to it, which is a moſt high preſumption; 'tis as if a

man of his own head ſhould go, as an Ambaſſador from his Prince. The Apoſtle ſays of the Prieſts of the Law, which yet are inferiour to thoſe of the Goſpel, *That no man taketh this honour to himſelf, but he which was called of God, Heb.* 5.4. How ſhall then any Man dare to aſſume this greater honour to himſelf, that is not called to it? Neither will it ſuffice to ſay, they have the inward call of the Spirit; for ſince God hath eſtabliſhed an order in the Church, for the admitting Men to this Office, they that ſhall take it upon them without that authority, reſiſt that Ordinance, and are but of the number of thoſe Thieves and Robbers, as our Saviour ſpeaks, *John* 10. *Which come not in by the door.* Beſides, the ſad experience of theſe times ſhews that many who pretend moſt to this inward call of the Spirit, are called by ſome other Spirit than that of God, the Doctrines they vent, being uſually directly contrary to that Word of his, on which all True Doctrines muſt be founded. Such are to be lookt on as thoſe Seducers, thoſe falſe Prophets, whereof we are ſo often warn'd in the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles. And whoſoever countenances them, or follows them, partakes with them in their guilt. It is recorded of *Jeroboam*, as a crying ſin, that he made of the meaneſt of the People Prieſts; that is, ſuch as had by God's Inſtitution no right to it: And whoever hearkens to theſe uncalled Preachers, runs into that very ſin; for without the encouragement of being followed, they would not long continue in the courſe, and therefore they that give them that encouragement, have much to anſwer for, and are certainly guilty of the ſin of deſpiſing their true Paſtors, when they ſhall thus ſet up theſe falſe Apoſtles againſt them. This is a guilt this Age is too much concerned in, God in his Mercy ſo timely convince us of it, as may put a ſtop to that confuſion and impiety, which breaks in ſo faſt upon us by it

9. Thirdly, We owe to them Maintenance: But of this I have ſpoken already in the firſt part of this Book, and ſhall not here repeat. Fourthly, We owe them Obedience. *Obey them*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that have the rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves, for they watch for your Souls, Heb.* 13. 17. This Obedience is to be paid them in Spiritual Things; that is, whatſoever they out of God's Word ſhall declare to us to be God's Commands, theſe we are diligently to obey, remembring that it is not they but God requires it, according to that of Chriſt, *He that heareth you heareth me, Luk.* 10. 6. And this, whether it be delivered by the way of publick Preaching, or private Exhortation, for in both, ſo long as they keep them to the rule, which is God's Word, they are the *Meſſengers of the Lord of Hoſts, Mal.* 2.7. This Obedience the Apoſtle inforceth from a double motive, one taken from their Miniſtery, another from themſelves. *They watch*, ſays he, *for your Souls, as they that muſt give an account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief.* The People are by their Obedience to enable their Paſtors to give a comfortable account of their Souls; and it is a moſt unkind return of all their care and labours, to be put to grieve for the ill ſucceſs of them. But then in the ſecond place, 'tis their own concernment alſo; they may put their Miniſters to the diſcomfort of ſeeing all their pains caſt away, but themſelves are like to get little by it, that (ſays the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 13. 17.) *will be unprofitable for you*; 'tis your ſelves that will finally prove the loſers by it, you loſe all thoſe glorious rewards, which are here offered, as the crown of this Obedience; you get nothing but an addition to your ſin and puniſhment; for as our Saviour tells the *Phariſees, If he had not come and ſpoken to them, they had not had ſin, John* 15. 24. that is, in compariſon with what they then had; ſo certainly they that never had the Goſpel preached to them, are much more innocent than they that have heard and reſiſted it.

Maintenance.

Obedience.

it. And for the puniſhment, what Chriſt told thoſe to whom he had preached, *That it ſhould be more tolerable for Tire and Sidon*, which were heathen Cities, *than for them*, the ſame undoubtedly we may conclude for our ſelves.

Prayers for them.

10. Laſtly, We are to pray for them; This S. *Paul* every where requires of his Spiritual Children; thus *Eph.* 6, 7, 8. having commanded Prayer for all Saints, he adds, *And for me that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the myſtery of the Goſpel*; and ſo again, *Col.* 4. 3. And this remains ſtill a duty to theſe Spiritual Fathers, to pray for ſuch aſſiſtances of God's Spirit to them, as may enable them rightly to diſcharge that Holy Calling. I ſhall omit to ſet down here, what is the duty of Miniſters to the People, upon the ſame conſideration, on which I forbear to mention the duty of Magiſtrates.

Duties to our natural Parents.

11. The third ſort of Parent is the Natural, The *Fathers of our fleſh*, as the Apoſtle calls them, *Heb.* 12. 9. And to theſe we owe ſeveral duties; as firſt, we owe them reverence and reſpect; we muſt behave our ſelves towards them with all humility and obſervance, and muſt not upon any pretence of infirmity in them deſpiſe or contemn them, either in outward behaviour, or ſo much as inwardly in our hearts. If indeed they have infirmities, it muſt be our buſineſs to cover and conceal them; like *Shem* and *Japhet*, who, while curſed *Cham* publiſht and *diſcloſed the nakedneſs of their Father, covered it*, *Gen.* 9. 23. and that in ſuch manner too, as even themſelves might not behold it. We are as much as may be to keep our ſelves from looking on thoſe nakedneſſes of our Parents, which may tempt us to think irreverently of them. This is very contrary to the practice of too many Children, who do not only publiſh and deride the infirmities of their Parents, but pretend they have thoſe infirmities they have not; there is ordinarily ſuch a Pride and headineſs in youth, that they cannot abide to ſubmit to the counſels and directions of their Elders, and therefore to ſhake them off, are willing to have them paſs for the effects of dotage, when they are indeed the fruits of ſobriety and experience. To ſuch the exhortation of *Solomon* is very neceſſary, *Prov.* 24. 22. *Hearken to thy Father that begat thee, and deſpiſe not thy Mother when ſhe is old.* A multitude of Texts more there are in that Book to this purpoſe, which ſhews that the wiſeſt of Men thought it neceſſary for Children to attend to the counſel of their Parents. But the Youth of our Age ſet up for Wiſdom the quite contrary way, and think they then become wits, when they are advanced to the deſpiſing the counſel, yea, mocking the perſons of their Parents. Let ſuch, if they will not practiſe the exhortations, yet remember the threatning of the Wiſe Man, *Prov.* 30. 17. *The eye that mocketh his Father and deſpiſeth to obey his Mother, the Ravens of the vally ſhall pick it out, and the young Eagles ſhall eat it.*

Reverence.

Love.

12. A ſecond duty we owe to them is Love; we are to bear them a real kindneſs, ſuch as may make us heartily deſirous of all manner of good to them, and abhor to do any thing that may grieve and diſquiet them. This will appear but common gratitude, when 'tis remembred what our Parents have done for us, how they were not only the inſtruments of firſt bringing us into the World, but alſo of ſuſtaining and ſupporting us after; and certainly they that rightly weigh the cares and fears, that go to the bringing up of a Child, will judge the love of that Child to be but a moderate return for them. This love is to be expreſt ſeveral ways, firſt, in all kindneſs of behaviour, carrying our ſelves not only with an awe and reſpect, but with kindneſs and affection, and therefore moſt gladly and

readily doing thoſe things, which may bring joy and comfort to them, and carefully avoiding whatever may grieve and afflict them. Secondly, This Love is to be expreſt in praying for them. The debt a Child owes to a Parent is ſo great, that he can never hope himſelf to diſcharge it, he is therefore to call in God's aid, to beg of him, that he will reward all the good his Parents have done for him, by multiplying his bleſſings upon them; what ſhall we then ſay to thoſe Children, that inſtead of calling to Heaven for bleſſings on their Parents, ranſack Hell for curſes on them, and pour out the blackeſt execrations againſt them? This is a thing ſo horrid, that one would think they needed no perſwaſion againſt it; becauſe none could be ſo vile as to fall into it; but we ſee God himſelf, who beſt knows mens hearts, ſaw it poſſible, and therefore laid the heavieſt puniſhment upon it. *He that curſeth Father or Mother, let him die the death*, *Exod.* 21. 17. And alas? our daily experience tells us, 'tis not only poſſible but common, even this of uttering curſes. But 'tis to be feared, there is another yet more common, that is, the wiſhing curſes, though fear or ſhame keep them from ſpeaking out. How many Children are there, that either through impatience of the Government, or greedineſs of the poſſeſſions of the Parents, have wiſht their deaths? But whoever doth ſo, let him remember, that how ſliely and fairly ſoever he carry it before Men, there is one that ſees thoſe ſecreteſt wiſhes of his heart, and in his ſight he aſſuredly paſſes for this hainous offender, a curſer of his Parents. And then let it be conſidered, that God hath as well the power of puniſhing as of ſeeing, and therefore ſince he hath pronounced death to be the reward of that ſin, 'tis not unreaſonable to expect he may himſelf inflict it; that they who watch for the death of their Parents, may untimely meet with their own. The Fifth Commandment promiſeth long Life as the reward of honouring the Parent, to which 'tis very agreeable that untimely death be the puniſhment of the contrary, and ſure there is nothing more highly contrary to that duty, than this we are now ſpeaking of, the curſing our Parents.

Obedience.

13. The third duty we owe to them is Obedience; this is not only contained in the Fifth Commandment, but expreſly injoyned in other places of Scripture, *Epheſ.* 6. 1. *Children obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is right*; and again, *Col.* 3. 20. *Children obey your Parents in all things for this is well-pleaſing to the Lord.* We owe them an Obedience in all things, unleſs where their commands are contrary to the commands of God, for in that caſe our duty to God muſt be preferred; and therefore if any Parent ſhall be ſo wicked, as to require his Child to ſteal, to lye, or to do any unlawful thing, the Child then offends not againſt his duty, though he diſobey that command, nay, he muſt diſobey, or elſe he offends againſt a higher duty, even that he owes to God his Heavenly Father. Yet when 'tis thus neceſſary to refuſe Obedience, he ſhould take care to do it in ſuch a modeſt and reſpectful manner, that it may appear 'tis Conſcience only, and not ſtubbornneſs moves him to it. But in caſe of all Lawful Commands; that is, when the thing commanded is either good, or not evil, when it hath nothing in it contrary to our duty to God, there the Child is bound to obey, be the command in a weightier or lighter matter. How little this duty is regarded is too manifeſt every where in the world, where Parents generally have their Children no longer under Command, than they are under the rod; when they are once grown up, they think themſelves free from all Obedience to them; or if ſome do continue to pay it, yet let the motive of it be examined, and 'twill in too many be found only Worldly

prudence. They fear to diſpleaſe their Parents, leaſt they ſhould ſhorten their hand towards them, and ſo they ſhall loſe ſomewhat by it; but how few are there that obey purely upon Conſcience of duty? This ſin of Diſobedience to Parents was by the Law of *Moſes* puniſhable with death, as you may read, *Deut.* 21. 18. but if Parents now-a-days ſhould proceed ſo with their Children, many might ſoon make themſelves childleſs.

Eſpecially in their Marriage.

14. But of all the acts of diſobedience, that of marrying againſt the conſent of the Parent is one of the higheſt. Children are ſo much the goods, the poſſeſſions of their Parent, that they cannot, without a kind of theft, give away themſelves without the allowance of thoſe that have the right in them; and therefore we ſee under the Law, *the Maid that had made any vow, was not ſuffered to perform it, without the conſent of the Parent*, *Numb.* 30. 5. The right of the Parent was thought of force enough to cancel and make void the Obligation, even of a Vow, and therefore ſurely it ought to be ſo much conſidered by us as to keep us from making any ſuch, whereby that right is infringed.

Miniſtring to their wants.

15. A fourth duty to the Parent is to aſſiſt and miniſter to them in all their wants of what kind ſoever, whether weakneſs and ſickneſs of Body, decayedneſs of Underſtanding, or Poverty and lowneſs in Eſtate; in all theſe the Child is bound, according to his ability, to relieve and aſſiſt them: For the two former, weakneſs of Body, and infirmity of Mind, none can doubt of the duty, when they remember how every Child did in his infancy receive the very ſame benefit from the Parents; the Child had then no ſtrength to ſupport, no underſtanding to guide it ſelf; the care of the Parents was fain to ſupply both theſe to it, and therefore in common gratitude, whenever either of theſe becomes the Parent's caſe, as ſometimes by great Age, or ſome accident both do, the Child is to perform the ſame offices back again to them. As that of relieving their Poverty, there is the very ſame Obligation to that with the former, it being but juſt to ſuſtain thy Parent who has formerly ſuſtained thee: but beſides this, Chriſt himſelf teacheth us, that this is contained within the precept of honouring their Parents: for when *Mark* 7. 13. he accuſes the *Phariſees of rejecting the commandment of God, to cleave to their own traditions*, he inſtances in this particular concerning the relieving of Parents, whereby 'tis manifeſt that this is a part of that duty which is enjoyned in the Fifth Commandment, as you may ſee at large in the Text, and ſuch a duty it is, that no pretence can abſolve, or acquit us of it. How then ſhall thoſe anſwer it, that deny relief to their poor Parents, that cannot part with their own exceſſes and ſuperfluities, which are indeed their ſins, to ſatisfie the neceſſities of thoſe to whom they owe their being? Nay, ſome there are yet worſe, who out of Pride ſcorn to own their Parents in their Poverty: thus it often happens, when the Child is advanced to dignity or wealth, they think it a diſparagement to them to look on their Parents that remain in a low condition, it being the betraying, as they think, to the World the meanneſs of their Birth, and ſo the poor Parent fares the worſe for the proſperity of his Child. This is ſuch a Pride and unnaturalneſs together, as will ſurely find a ſharp vengeance from God; for if *Solomon* obſerve of Pride alone, that it is the *forerunner of deſtruction*, *Prov.* 16. 18. we may much rather conclude ſo of it, when it is thus accompanied.

Duty to be paid even to the worſt of Parents.

16. To this that hath been ſaid of the duty of Children to their Parents, I ſhall add only this: that no unkindneſs, no fault of the Parent, can acquit the Child of this duty; but as S. *Peter* tells Servants, 1 *Pet.* 2. 18. that they *muſt be ſubject not only to the good and gentle Maſters, but alſo*

to the forward; ſo certainly it belongs to Children to perform duty, not only to the kind and vertuous, but even to the harſheſt,and wickedeſt Parent. For though the gratitude due to a kind Parent, be a very forcible motive to make the Child pay his duty, yet that is not the only nor chiefeſt ground of it; that is laid in the command of God, who requires us thus to honour our Parents, and therefore though we ſhould ſuppoſe a Parent ſo unnatural, as never to have done any thing to oblige the Child (which can hardly be imagined) yet ſtill the Command of God continues in force, and we are in conſcience of that, to perform that duty to our Parents, though none of the other tye of gratitude ſhould lie on us.

Duty of Parents to Children.

But as this is due from the child to the Parent, ſo on the other ſide there are other things alſo due from the Parents to the Child, and that throughout the ſeveral States and Ages of it.

To nouriſh them.

17. Firſt, There is the care of nouriſhing and ſuſtaining it, which begins from the very Birth, and continues a duty from the Parent, till the Child be able to perform it to himſelf; this is a duty which Nature teaches; even the ſavage Beaſts have a great care and tenderneſs in nouriſhing their young, and therefore may ſerve to reproach and condemn all Parents, who ſhall be ſo unnatural as to neglect this. I ſhall not here enter into the queſtion, *Whether the Mother be obliged to give the Child its firſt nouriſhment, by giving it Suck her ſelf*, becauſe 'twill not be poſſible to affirm univerſally in the Caſe, there being many circumſtances, which may alter it, and make it not only lawful, but beſt not to do it: All I ſhall ſay, is, that where no impediment of ſickneſs, weakneſs, or the like do happen, 'tis ſurely beſt for the Mother her ſelf to perform this office, there being many advantages to the Child by it, which a good Mother ought ſo far to conſider as not to ſell them to her own ſloth, or niceneſs, or any ſuch unworthy motive; for where ſuch only are the grounds of forbearing it, they will never be able to juſtifie the omiſſion, they being themſelves unjuſtifiable.

Bring them to Baptiſm.

But beſides this firſt care, which belongs to the Body of the Child, there is another, which ſhould begin near as early, which belongs to their Souls, and that is the bringing them to the Sacrament of Baptiſm, thereby to procure them an early right to all thoſe precious advantages, which that Sacrament conveighs to them. This is a duty the Parents ought not to delay, it being moſt reaſonable, that they who have been inſtruments to conveigh the ſtain and pollution of ſin to the poor Infant, ſhould be very earneſt and induſtrious to have it waſht off, as ſoon as may be: Beſides, the Life of ſo tender a Creature is but a blaſt, and many times gone in a moment; and though we are not to deſpair of God's Mercy to thoſe poor Children who die without Baptiſm, yet ſurely thoſe Parents commit a great fault by whoſe neglect it is that they want it.

Educate them.

18. Secondly, The Parents muſt provide for the Education of the Child; they muſt, as *Solomon* ſpeaks, *Prov.* 22. 6. *Train up the Child in the way he ſhould go.* As ſoon therefore as Children come to the uſe of Reaſon, they are to be inſtructed, and that firſt in thoſe things which concern their eternal well-being, they are by little and little to be taught all thoſe things which God hath commanded them as their duty to perform; as alſo what glorious rewards he hath provided for them, if they do it, and what grievous and eternal puniſhment, if they do it not. Theſe things ought as early as is poſſible, to be inſtilled into the minds of Children, which (like new veſſels) do uſually keep the ſavour of that which is firſt put into them; and therefore it nearly concerns all Parents to look they be at firſt thus ſeaſoned with Vertue and Religion. 'Tis ſure if this be neglected, there is one

ready at hand to fill them with the contrary; the Devil will be diligent enough to inſtil into them all wickedneſs and vice, even from their Cradles; and there being alſo in all our Natures ſo much the greater aptneſs to evil than to good, there is need of great care and watchfulneſs to prevent thoſe endeavours of that enemy of Souls, which can no way be, but by poſſeſſing them at firſt with good things, breeding in them a love to vertue, and a hatred of vice; that ſo when the temptations come, they may be armed againſt them. This ſurely is above all things the duty of Parents to look after, and the neglect of it is a horrible cruelty; we juſtly look upon thoſe Parents, as moſt unnatural wretches, that take away the life of their Child; but alas! that is mercy and tenderneſs, compared to this of neglecting his Education, for by that he ruines his Soul, makes him miſerable eternally; and God knows multitudes of ſuch cruel Parents there are in the World, that thus give up their Children to be poſſeſt by the Devil, for want of an early acquainting them with the ways of God; nay indeed, how few there are that do conſcionably perform this duty is too apparent by the ſtrange rudeneſs and ignorance that is generally among youth; the Children of thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians, being frequently as ignorant of God and Chriſt as the meereſt Heathens. But whoever they are that thus neglect this great duty, let them know that it is not only a fearful miſery they bring upon their poor Children, but alſo a horrible guilt upon themſelves. For as God ſays to the careleſs Watchman, *Ezek.* 3. 18. *That if any ſoul periſh* by his negligence, *that ſoul ſhall be required at his hands*; ſo ſurely will it fare with all Parents who have this office of Watchmen intruſted to them by God over their own Children. A ſecond part of Education is the bringing them up to ſome employment, buſying them in ſome honeſt exerciſe, whereby they may avoid that great ſnare of the Devil, Idleneſs: and alſo be taught ſome uſeful Art or Trade, whereby when they come to Age, they may become profitable to the Common-wealth, and able to get an honeſt living to themſelves.

Means towards the Education of Children.

19. To this great duty of Educating of Children there is required as means, Firſt, Encouragement; Secondly, Correction. Encouragement is firſt to be tried, we ſhould endeavour to make Children in love with duty, by offering them rewards and invitations, and whenever they do well, take notice of it, and encourage them to go on. It is an ill courſe ſome Parents hold, who think they muſt never appear to their Children but with a face of ſowreneſs and auſterity; this ſeems to be that which S. *Paul* forewarns Parents of, when he bids *Fathers* not to *provoke their Children to wrath, Col.* 3. 21. To be as harſh and unkind to them, when they do well, as if they do ill, is the way to provoke them; and then the Apoſtle tells us in the ſame Verſe, what will be the iſſue of it, they will be diſcouraged, they will have no heart to go on in any good Courſe, when the Parent affords them no countenance. The ſecond means is Correction, and this becomes ſeaſonable, when the former will do no good, when all fair means, perſwaſions, and encouragements prevail not, then there is a neceſſity of uſing ſharper; and let that be firſt tried in words, I mean not by railing and foul language, but in ſober, yet ſharp reproof; but if that fail too, then proceed to blows; and in this caſe, as *Solomon* ſays, *He that ſpareth his rod hateth his Son, Prov.* 13. 24, 'tis a cruel fondneſs, that to ſpare a few ſtripes at preſent, will adventure him to thoſe ſad miſchiefs, which commonly befal the Child that is left to himſelf. But then this Correction muſt be given in ſuch a manner, as may be likely to do good; to which purpoſe it muſt firſt be given timely; the Child muſt not be ſuffered to run

on in any ill, till it hath got a habit, and a ſtubbornneſs too. This is a great error in many Parents, they will let their Children alone for divers years, to do what they liſt, permit them to lye, to ſteal, without ever ſo much as rebuking them, nay, perhaps pleaſe themſelves to ſee the witty ſhifts of the Child, and think it matters not what they do while they are little: but alas! all that while the vice gets root, and that many times ſo deep an one, that all they can do afterwards, whether by words or blows, can never pluck it up. Secondly, Correction muſt be moderate, not exceeding the quality of the fault, nor the tenderneſs of the Child. Thirdly, it muſt not be given in rage, if it be, it will not only be in danger of being immoderate, but it will loſe its effects upon the Child, who will think he is corrected, not becauſe he has done a fault, but becauſe his Parent is angry, and ſo will rather blame the Parent than himſelf; whereas on the contrary, care ſhould be taken to make the Child as ſenſible of the fault, as of the ſmart, without which he will never be throughly amended.

20. Thirdly, After Children are grown up, and are paſt the age of Education, there are yet other offices for the Parent to perform to them; the Parent is ſtill to watch over them in reſpect of their Souls, to obſerve how they practiſe thoſe Precepts which are given them in their Education, and accordingly to exhort, incourage, or reprove, as they find occaſion.

T[illegible] to w[illegible] over th[illegible] Souls eve[illegible] when they are grown up.

21. So alſo for their outward Eſtate, they are to put them into ſome courſe of living in the World; if God have bleſt the Parent with Wealth, according to what he hath, he muſt diſtribute to his Children, remembring that ſince he was the inſtrument of bringing them into the World, he is, according to his ability, to provide for their comfortable living in it; they are therefore to be lookt on as very unnatural Parents, who, ſo they may have enough to ſpend in their own riot and exceſs, care not what becomes of their Children, never think of providing for them. Another fault is uſual among Parents in this buſineſs; they defer all the proviſions for them, till themſelves be dead, heap up, perhaps, great matters for them againſt that time, but in the mean time afford them not ſuch a competency, as may enable them to live in the World. There are ſeveral miſchiefs come from this: Firſt it leſſens the Child's affection to his Parent, nay, ſometimes it proceeds ſo far, as to make him wiſh his Death: which though it be ſuch a fault, as no temptation can excuſe in a Child, yet 'tis alſo a great fault in a Parent, to give that temptation. Secondly, It puts the Child upon ſhifts and tricks, many times diſhoneſt ones, to ſupply his neceſſities; this is, I doubt not, a common effect of it, the hardneſs of Parents has often put men upon very unlawful courſes, which when they are once acquainted with, perhaps they never leave, though the firſt occaſion ceaſe; and therefore Parents ought to beware how they run them upon thoſe hazards. Beſides, The Parent loſes that contentment, which he might have in ſeeing his Children live proſperouſly and comfortably, which none but an arrant Earth-worm would exchange for the vain imaginary pleaſure of having money in his Cheſt. But in this buſineſs of providing for Children there is yet another thing to be heeded, and that is, that the Parent get that Wealth honeſtly, which he makes their portion; elſe 'tis very far from being a proviſion: there is ſuch a curſe goes along with an ill gotten Eſtate, that he that leaves ſuch a one to his Child, doth but cheat and deceive him, makes him believe he has left him Wealth, but has withal put ſuch a canker in the bowels of it, that is ſure to eat it out.

To provide for their ſubſiſtence.

This is ſo common an obſervation, that I need ſay nothing to confirm the truth of it; would God it were as generally laid to heart, as it ſeems to be generally taken notice of: Then ſurely Parents would not account it a reaſonable motive to unjuſt dealing, that they may thereby provide for their Children, for this is not a way of providing for them; nay, 'tis the way to ſpoil them of whatever they have lawfully gathered for them; the leaſt mite of unlawful gain being of the nature of leaven, which ſowres the whole lump, bringing down curſes upon all a Man poſſeſſeth. Let all Parents therefore ſatisfie themſelves with ſuch proviſions for their Children, as God ſhall enable them honeſtly to make, aſſuring themſelves how little ſoever it be, 'tis a better portion than the greateſt wealth unjuſtly gotten; according to that of *Solomon, Prov.* 16.8. *Better is a little with righteouſneſs, than great revenues without right.*

To give them good Example.

22. A fourth thing the Parent owes to the Child is Good Example, he is not only to ſet him rules of Vertue and Godlineſs, but he muſt himſelf give him a pattern in his own practice; we ſee the force of Example is infinitely beyond that of Precept, eſpecially where the Perſon is one to whom we bear a reverence, or with whom we have a continual converſation; both which uſually meet in a Parent. It is therefore a moſt neceſſary care in all Parents to behave themſelves ſo before their Children, that their Example may be a means of winning them to Vertue. But alas! this Age affords little of this care, nay, ſo far 'tis from it, that there are none more frequently the inſtruments of corrupting Children, than their own Parents. And indeed how can it be otherwiſe! While Men give themſelves liberty to all wickedneſs, 'tis not to be hoped, but that the Children which obſerve it, will imitate it; the Child that ſees his Father drunk, will ſurely think he may be ſo too, as well as his Father. So he that hears him ſwear, will do the like, and ſo for all other Vices; and if any Parent that is thus wicked himſelf ſhould happen to have ſo much more care of his Child's Soul than his own, as to forbid him the things which himſelf practiſes, or correct him for the doing them; 'tis certain the Child will account this a great injuſtice in his Father, to puniſh him for that which himſelf freely does, and ſo he is never likely to be wrought upon by it. This conſideration lays a moſt ſtrict tye upon all Parents to live Chriſtianly, for otherwiſe they do not only hazard their own Souls, but thoſe of their Children alſo, and as it were, purchaſe an Eſtate of inheritance in Hell.

To bleſs them.

23. A fifth duty of Parents is bleſſing their Children; the way of doing that is double, firſt, by their prayer; they are by daily and earneſt prayers to commend them to God's protection and bleſſing, both for their ſpiritual and temporal eſtate; and ſecondly, by their piety; they are to be ſuch perſons themſelves as that a bleſſing may deſcend from them upon their poſterity. This is often promiſed in Scripture to godly men, that their *Seed ſhall be bleſſed.* Thus in the Second Commandment, God promiſes *to ſhew mercy to the thouſandth generation of them that love him and keep his Commandments.* And it is very obſervable in the *Jews*, that though they were a ſtiff-necked generation, and had very grievouſly provoked God, yet the godlineſs of their fore-fathers, *Abraham, Iſaac* and *Jacob*, did many times move God to ſave them from deſtruction; on the other ſide, we ſee that even good Men have fared the worſe for the iniquities of their Fathers; thus when *Joſiah* had deſtroyed Idolatry, reſtor'd God's ſervice, and done good beyond all the Kings that were before him, yet there was an old arrear of *Manaſſeh* his Grandfather, which all this piety of his would not blot out, but he reſolves to caſt *Judah alſo out of his ſight*, as you may read at

large, 2 *Kings* 23. If therefore Parents have any bowels, any kindneſs towards their Children, any real deſire of their proſperity, let them take care, by their own godly life, to entail a bleſſing upon them.

To give no unreaſonable commands.

24. Sixthly, Parents muſt take heed, that they uſe their power over their Children with equity and moderation, not to oppreſs them with Unreaſonable Commands, only to exerciſe their own authority, but in all things of weight to conſider the real good of their Children, and to preſs them to nothing, which may not conſiſt with that. This is a rule whereof Parents may often have uſe, but in none greater than in the buſineſs of marrying their Children, wherein many that otherwiſe are good Parents, have been to blame; when out of an eagerneſs of beſtowing them wealthily, they force them to marry utterly againſt their own inclinations, which is a great tyranny, and that which frequently betrays them to a multitude of miſchiefs, ſuch as all the wealth in the world cannot repair. There are two things which Parents ought eſpecially to conſider in the matching their Children; the firſt, How they may live Chriſtianly; and to that purpoſe to chuſe a vertuous and pious Perſon to link them with; the ſecond is, how they may live chearfully and comfortably in this world; and to that end, though a competency of Eſtate may be neceſſary to be regarded, yet ſurely abundance is no way requiſite, and therefore that ſhould not be too vehemently ſought after; that which much more tends to the happineſs of that ſtate, is the mutual kindneſs and liking of the parties, without which marriage is of all other the moſt uncomfortable condition, and therefore no Parent ought to thruſt a Child into it. I have now done with the firſt ſort of Relation, that of a Parent.

SUNDAY XV.

Of duty to our Brethren, and Relations, Husband, Wife, Friends, Maſters, Servants.

Dues to Brethren.

Sect. 1. THE ſecond ſort of Relation is that of a Brother, now brotherhood may be two-fold, either Natural, or Spiritual; the latter may in the largeſt extent contain under it all Mankind, all that partake of the ſame Nature; but I ſhall not conſider it ſo in this place, having already mentioned thoſe general duties which belong to all as ſuch. I now ſpeak of that Natural brotherhood that is between thoſe that are the Children of the ſame immediate Parent; and the duty of theſe is to have united hearts and affections: This Nature points out to them, they partaking in a more eſpecial manner of each others ſubſtance, and therefore ought to have, the greateſt tenderneſs and kindneſs, each to other; thus we ſee *Abraham* makes it an argument, why there ſhould be *no contention between him and Lot, becauſe they were brethren, Gen.* 13. 8. And though by Brethren there is meant only Couſins, yet that helps the more ſtrongly to conclude, that this nearer Relation is in reaſon to be a greater bar to ſtrife, as alſo that this kindneſs is in ſome degree to be extended to all that have any nearneſs of bloud to us.

Natural.

The neceſſity of Love among Brethren.

2. This Kindneſs and Love between Brethren and Siſters ought to be very firmly grounded in their hearts; if it be not, they will be of all others in moſt danger of diſagreeing; for the continual converſation that is among them whileſt they are at home in the Father's houſe, will be apt to miniſter ſome occaſion of jar. Beſides, the equality that is among them in reſpect of birth, often makes them inclinable to envy each other, when

one is in any reſpect advanced above the other. Thus we ſee *Joſeph*'s brethren envied him, becauſe he had moſt of his Father's love, and *Rachel* envied her ſiſter *Leah*, becauſe ſhe was fruitful; therefore for the preventing of ſuch temptations, let all that have Brethren and Siſters, poſſeſs their mind with a great and real kindneſs to them, look on them as parts of themſelves, and then they will never think fit either to quarrel with them, or to envy them any advantage, any more than one part of the body does another of the ſame body, but will ſtrive to advance and help forward the good of each other.

Spiritual brotherhood.

3. The ſecond kind of Brotherhood is Spiritual; that contains all thoſe who profeſs the ſame Faith with us: The Church in our Baptiſm becomes a Mother to each baptized perſon; and then ſurely, they that have the relation of Children to her, muſt have alſo the relation of Brethren to each other; and to this ſort of Brethren alſo we owe a great deal of tenderneſs and affection; the Spiritual bond of Religion ſhould of all others the moſt cloſely unite our hearts. This is the Brotherhood which S. *Peter* exhorts us to love, 1 *Pet.* 2. 17. And to it we are in an eſpecial manner bound to do all good offices, *Do good*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *to all, but eſpecially to them that are of the houſhold of Faith, Gal.* 6. 10. Our compaſſions are to be moſt melting towards them of all others, in all their needs; Chriſt tells us, that *whoſoever gives but a cup of cold water to any in the name of a Diſciple, ſhall not loſe his reward, Matth.* 10. 42. From whence we may aſſure our ſelves, that this peculiar love to Chriſtians as Chriſtians, is very acceptable in his ſight.

Our duty to hold communion with theſe brethren.

4. Several duties there are required of us to theſe Brethren; one principal, is the holding Communion with them, and that firſt in Doctrine; we are conſtantly to continue in the belief and profeſſion of all thoſe neceſſary truths, by which we may be mark'd out as followers and Diſciples of Chriſt. This is that Faith which S. *Jude* ſpeaks of, which was *once delivered to the Saints, Jude* 3. by keeping whereof we continue ſtill united to this Spiritual Brotherhood, in reſpect of profeſſion, which we muſt conſtantly do, what ſtorms and perſecutions ſoever attend it, according to the exhortation of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 10. 22. *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering.* Secondly, We are alſo as opportunity ſerves, to communicate with them in all holy offices; we muſt be diligent in frequenting the Aſſemblies of the Saints, which is as it were the badge of our profeſſion, and therefore he that willingly withdraws himſelf from theſe, gives ground to ſuſpect he will be apt to renounce the other alſo. But theſe parts of communion we find ſtrictly maintained by the firſt Chriſtians, *Acts* 2. 42. *They continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.* They continued and that ſtedfaſtly, they were not frighted from it by any Perſecutions, though that were a time wherein they were tried with the ſharpeſt ſufferings; which may teach us, that it is not the danger that attends this duty, can acquit us of it.

To bear with their Infirmities.

5. Secondly, We are to bear with the infirmities of our Chriſtian brethren, according to the advice of S. *Paul, Rom.* 15. 1. *We that are ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.* If one that holds all neceſſary Chriſtian truths, happen yet to be in ſome error, we are not for this, either to forſake his communion, or deſpiſe his Perſon. This S. *Paul* teaches us in the caſe of that weak brother, *Who by error made a cauſleſs ſcruple about meats, Rom.* 14. where he bids the ſtronger Chriſtians, that is, thoſe who being better inſtructed, diſcerned him to be in an error, yet to receive him nevertheleſs, and not to deſpiſe him; as on the other ſide, he bids that

weak one not to judge the ſtronger. The leſſer differences in opinion muſt be born with on both ſides, and muſt not in the leaſt abate our brotherly charity towards each other.

To reſtore them after falls.

6. Thirdly, We are to endeavour the reſtoring of any fallen brother, that is, to bring him to repentance, after he hath fallen into any ſin. Thus S. *Paul* commands the *Galatians*, that they ſhould *reſtore him that was overtaken in a fault, conſidering themſelves leſt they were alſo tempted.* We are not to look on him as a caſt-away, to give him over as utterly deſperate, neither are we to triumph over him, in reſpect of our own innocence, like the proud *Phariſee* over the poor *Publican*, *Luke* 18. 11. but we are meekly to endeavour his recovery, remembring that our own frailty is ſuch, that we are not ſecure from the like falls.

To Sympathize with them.

7. Fourthly, we are to have a ſympathy and fellow-feeling with theſe Brethren, to be nearly toucht with whatſoever beſals them, either as they are conſidered in Society or in ſingle Perſons. In Society firſt, and ſo they make up a Church; and that either the univerſal, which is made up of all Believers throughout the World, or any particular Church, which is made up of all the Believers in that particular Nation; and whatever happens to either of theſe, either the whole Church in general, or any ſuch ſingle part of it, eſpecially that whereof our ſelves are members, we are to be much affected and moved with it, to rejoyce in all the proſperities, and to mourn and bewail all the breaches and deſolations thereof, and daily and earneſtly to pray with *David*, *Pſalm* 51. 18. *O be favourable and gracious unto* Sion, *build thou the walls of* Jeruſalem; and that eſpecially when we ſee her in diſtreſs and perſecution. Whoſoever is not thus toucht with the condition of the Church, is not to be look'd on as a living member of it; for as in the Natural Body every member is concerned in the proſperity of the whole, ſo certainly 'tis here: It was the obſervation of the Pſalmiſt, that *God's ſervants think upon the ſtones of* Sion, *and pity to ſee her in the duſt*, *Pſal.* 102. 14. and ſurely all his ſervants are ſtill of the ſame temper, cannot look on the ruines and deſolations of the Church, without the greateſt ſorrow and lamentation. Secondly, We are to have this fellow-feeling with our brethren, conſider'd as ſingle Perſons; We are to account our ſelves concerned in every particular Chriſtian, ſo as to partake with him in all his occaſions either of joy or ſorrow. Thus the Apoſtle exhorts, *Rom.* 12. 14. *Rejoyce with them that rejoyce, weep with them that weep:* And again, 1 *Cor.* 12. under the ſimilitude of the Natural Body he urges this duty, *Whether one member ſuffer all the members ſuffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoyce with it.* All theſe ſeveral effects of love, we owe to theſe Spiritual Brethren. And this love is that, which Chriſt hath made the badge of his diſciples, *John* 13. 35. *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another*; ſo that if we mean not to caſt off diſcipleſhip to Chriſt, we muſt not forſake this love of the Brethren.

The Wife owes to the Husband Obedience.

8. The third relation is that between Husband and Wife; This is yet much nearer than either of the former, as appears by that Text, *Epheſ.* 5. 31. *A man ſhall leave Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife, and they two ſhall be one fleſh.* Several duties there are owing from one of theſe perſons to the other: And firſt for the Wife, ſhe owes Obedience. This is commanded by the Apoſtle, *Col.* 3. 18. *Wives ſubmit your ſelves to your own Husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.* They are to render Obedience to their Husbands in the Lord, that is, in all lawful commands; for otherwiſe 'tis here, as in the caſe of all other Superiors, God muſt be obeyed rather than Man,

and the Wife muſt not upon the Husband's command do any thing which is forbidden by God. But in all things which do not croſs ſome command of God's, this Precept is of force, and will ſerve to condemn the peeviſh ſtubbornneſs of many Wives who reſiſt the lawful commands of their Husbands, only becauſe they are impatient of this duty of ſubjection, which God himſelf requires of them. But it may here be asked, What if the Husband command ſomething, which though it be not unlawful, is yet very inconvenient and imprudent, muſt the Wife ſubmit to ſuch a command? To this I anſwer, That it will be no diſobedience in her, but duty, calmly and mildly to ſhew him the inconveniencies thereof, and to perſwade him to retract that command; but in caſe ſhe cannot win him to it by fair intreaties, ſhe muſt neither try ſharp Language, nor yet finally refuſe to obey. nothing but the unlawfulneſs of the command being ſufficient warrant for that.

Fidelity

9. Secondly, The Wife owes Fidelity to the Husband, and that of two ſorts; firſt, that of the Bed, ſhe muſt keep her ſelf pure and chaſt from all ſtrange embraces, and therefore muſt not ſo much as give an ear to any that would allure her, but with the greateſt abhorrence reject all motions of that ſort, and never give any Man that has once made ſuch a motion to her, the leaſt opportunity to make a ſecond. Secondly, She owes him likewiſe Fidelity in the managing thoſe worldly affairs he commits to her, ſhe muſt order them ſo, as may be moſt to her Husband's advantage; and not by deceiving and cozening of him employ his Goods to ſuch uſes as he allows not of.

Love.

10. Thirdly, She owes him Love, and together with that all friendlineſs and kindneſs of converſation: She is to endeavour to bring him as much aſſiſtance, and comfort of Life, as is poſſible, that ſo ſhe may anſwer that ſpecial end of the Woman's Creation, the being *a help to her Husband*, *Gen.* 2. 13. and this in all conditions, whether health or ſickneſs, wealth or poverty, whatſoever eſtate God by his Providence ſhall caſt him into, ſhe muſt be as much of comfort and ſupport to him as ſhe can. To this all ſullenneſs and harſhneſs, all brawling and unquietneſs is directly contrary, for that makes the Wife the burden and plague of the Man, inſtead of a help and comfort: and ſure if it be a fault to behave ones ſelf ſo to any perſon, as hath already been ſhewed, how great muſt it be to do ſo to him, to whom the greateſt kindneſs and affection is owing?

The faults of the Husband acquit not from theſe duties.

11. Nor let ſuch Wives think that any faults, or provocations of the Husband can juſtifie their frowardneſs; for they will not, either in reſpect of Religion or Diſcretion. Not in Religion, for where God has abſolutely commanded a duty to be paid, 'tis not any unworthineſs of the perſon can excuſe from it; nor in Diſcretion, for the worſe a Husband is, the more need there is for the Wife to carry her ſelf with that gentleneſs and ſweetneſs, that may be moſt likely to win him. This is the advice S. *Peter* gave the Wives of his time, 1 *Pet.* 3. 1. *Likewiſe ye wives be in ſubjection to your own Husbands, that if any obey not the word, they may without the word be won by the converſation of the Wives.* It ſeems the good behaviour of the Wives was thought a powerful means to win men from Heatheniſm to Chriſtianity; and ſure it might now a-days have ſome good effects, if Women would have but the patience to try it: At the leaſt, 'twould have this, that it would keep ſome tolerable quiet in Families, whereas on the other ſide, the ill fruits of the Wives unquietneſs are ſo notorious, that there are few neighbourhoods, but can give ſome inſtance of it. How many men are there, that to avoid the noiſe of a froward Wife, have fallen to company-

pany-keeping and by that to drunkenneſs, poverty, and a multitude of miſchiefs? Let all Wives therefore beware of adminiſtring that temptation. But whenever there happens any thing, which, in kindneſs to her Husband, ſhe is to admoniſh him of, let it be with that ſoftneſs and mildneſs, that it may appear 'tis love, and not anger that makes her ſpeak.

The Husband owes to the Wife love.

12. There are alſo on the Husband's part ſeveral duties; there is firſt Love which S. *Paul* requires to be very tender and compaſſionate towards the Wife, as appears by the ſimilitudes he uſeth in that matter, *Eph.* 5. The one, that of the love a Man bears to his natural Body. *No man*, ſays he, Verſe 29. *ever hateth his own fleſh, but nouriſheth it, and cheriſheth it.* The other love is that Chriſt bears to his Church; which is far greater, *verſe* 25. both which he ſets as patterns of this love of Husbands towards their Wives. This utterly forbids all harſhneſs and roughneſs to them; Men are to uſe them as parts of themſelves, to love them as their own bodies, and therefore to do nothing that may be hurtful and grievous to them, no more than they would cut and gaſh their own fleſh. Let thoſe Husbands that tyrannize over their Wives, that ſcarce uſe them like humane Creatures, conſider whether that be to love them as their own Bodies.

Faithfulneſs.

13. A ſecond duty of the Husband, is Faithfulneſs to the bed. This is by God as well required of the Husband, as the Wife; and though the World do ſeem to look on the breach of this duty with leſs abhorrence in the Husband, yet ſure before that juſt Judge, the offence will appear no leſs on the Man's ſide, than the Womans. This is certain, 'tis in both a breach of the Vow made to each other at their Marriage, and ſo beſides the uncleanneſs, a down-right Perjury, and thoſe differences in the caſe, which ſeem to caſt the ſcale, are rather in reſpect of civil and worldly conſideration, than meerly of the ſin.

Maintenance.

14. A third part of the Husband is to maintain and provide for the Wife. He is to let her partake with him in thoſe outward good things, wherewith God hath bleſt him, and neither by niggardlineſs debar her of what is fit for her, nor yet by unthriftineſs ſo waſt his Goods, that he ſhall become unable to ſupport her. This is certainly the duty of the Husband, who being as hath been ſaid, to account his Wife as a part of his own Body, muſt have the very ſame care to ſuſtain her, that he hath for himſelf. Yet this is not ſo to be underſtood, as to excuſe the Wife from her part of Labour and Induſtry, when that is requiſite, it being unreaſonable the Husband ſhould toil to maintain the Wife in idleneſs.

Inſtruction.

15. Fourthly, The Husband is to inſtruct the Wife, in the things which concern her Eternal Welfare, if ſhe be ignorant of them. Thus S. *Paul* bids the *Wives learn of their Husbands at home*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 36. which ſuppoſes that the Husband is to teach her. Indeed it belongs to every Maſter of a Family to endeavour that all under his charge be taught all neceſſary things of this kind, and then ſure more eſpecially his Wife, who is ſo much nearer to him than all the reſt. This ſhould make men careful to get knowledge themſelves, that ſo they may be able to perform this duty they owe to others.

Husbands and Wives mutually to pray for and aſſiſt each other in all good.

16. Laſtly, Husbands and Wives are mutually to pray for each other, to beg all bleſſings from God both Spiritual and Temporal, and to endeavour all they can to do all good to one another, eſpecially all good to each others Souls, by ſtirring up to the performance of duty, and diſſwading and drawing back from all ſin, and by being like true yoke-fellows, helpful and aſſiſtant to each other in the doing of all ſorts of good, both to their own Family and all others within their reach. This is of all other the trueſt and moſt valuable Love. Nay, indeed, how can it be ſaid they

do love at all, who contentedly let each other run on in a courſe that will bring them to Eternal Miſery; And if the love of Husbands and Wives were thus grounded in Vertue and Religion, 'twould make their lives a kind of Heaven on Earth; 'twould prevent all thoſe contentions and brawlings, ſo common among them, which are the great plagues of Families, and the leſſer Hell in paſſage to the greater; and truly where it is not thus founded, there is little comfort to be expected in marriage.

The vertue of the perſon the chief conſideration in Marriage.

17. It ſhould therefore be the care of every one that means to enter upon that ſtate to conſider adviſedly before-hand, and to chuſe ſuch a perſon with whom they may have this Spiritual Friendſhip, that is, ſuch a one as truly fears God. There are many falſe ends of Marriage lookt upon in the world: Some marry for Wealth, others for Beauty, and generally they are only worldly reſpects that are at all conſidered; but certainly he that would marry as he ought, ſhould contrive to make his Marriage uſeful to thoſe better ends of ſerving God, and ſaving his own Soul; at leaſt he muſt be ſure it be no hinderance to them,and to that purpoſe the Vertue of the perſon choſen is more conducing than all the wealth in the world, though I deny not, but that a competency of that may likewiſe be conſidered.

Unlawful Marriages.

18. But above all things let all take heed, that they make not ſuch marriages, as may not only be ill in their effects, but are actual ſins at the time; ſuch are the marriages of thoſe that were formerly promiſed to ſome other, in which caſe 'tis ſure they rightly belong to thoſe to whom they paſt the firſt promiſe; and then for any other to marry them, during the life of that perſon, is to take the Husband or Wife of that other, which is direct Adultery, as S. *Paul* tells us, *Rom.* 7. 3. The like unlawfulneſs there is alſo in the marriage of thoſe, who are within thoſe degrees of kindred forbidden by God, the particulars whereof are ſet down in the 18. and 20. of *Levit.* and whoever marries any that is within any of thoſe degrees of nearneſs, either to himſelf, or to his deceaſed Wife, which is as bad, commits that great ſin of Inceſt, and ſo long as he continues to live with ſuch his unlawful Wife, remains in that fearful guilt. This warineſs of the choice of the perſon to be married, would prevent many ſad effects, which we daily ſee follow ſuch raſh or unlawful matches. It were well therefore if people would look on marriage, as our Church adviſes, as a thing not to be *undertaken lightly, unadviſedly, or wantonly, to ſatisfie mens carnal luſts and appetites*; *but reverently, diſcreetly, adviſedly, ſoberly, and in the fear of God*; and in ſo doing, no doubt, a bleſſing would follow, which otherwiſe there is little ground to expect. I have now done with this Relation between Husband and Wife.

Friendſhip.

19. The next is that between Friends; and this Relation if it be rightly founded, is of great nearneſs and uſefulneſs; but there is none more generally miſtaken in the world; Men uſually call them their friends, with whom they have an intimacy and frequency of converſation, though that intimacy be indeed nothing but an agreement and combination in ſin. The Drunkard thinks him his friend that will keep him company; the deceitful perſon, him that will aid him in his cheats; the proud Man, him that will flatter him; And ſo generally in all Vices, they are look'd on as Friends that advance and further us in them. But God knows this is far from friendſhip; ſuch a friend as this, the Devil himſelf is in the higheſt degree, who is never backward in ſuch offices. The true Friendſhip is that of a direct contrary making; 'tis a concurrence and agreement in Vertue, not in Vice: In ſhort, a true Friend loves his Friend ſo, that he is very zealous of his good; and certainly he that is really

ſo, will never be the inſtrument of bringing him to the greateſt evil. The general duty of a friend then muſt be reſolved to be the induſtrious purſuit of his friends real advantages, in which there are ſeveral particulars contained. *Its duties.*

20. As firſt, Faithfulneſs in all Truſt committed to him by his Friend, whether that of Goods or Secrets; he that betrays the Truſt of a Friend in either, is by all Men lookt upon with abhorrence, it being one of the higheſt falſeneſſes and treacheries, and for ſuch treacherous wounds the Wiſe Man tells us, *Every friend will depart*, Ecclus. 22.22. *Faithfulneſs.*

21. Secondly, 'tis the duty of a Friend to be aſſiſting to his Friend in all his outward needs; to counſel him when he wants Advice; to chear him when he needs Comfort; to give him when he wants Relief; and to endeavour his reſcue out of any trouble or danger. An admirable example we have of this friendſhip in *Jonathan* to *David*, *he loved him as his own ſoul*, and we ſee he not only contrives for his ſafety when he was in danger, but runs hazards himſelf to reſcue and deliver his Friend, draws his Father's anger upon him, to turn it from *David*, as you may read at large, 1 *Sam.* 20. *Aſſiſtance.*

22. The third and higheſt duty of a Friend is to be aiding and aſſiſting to the Soul of his Friend, to endeavour to advance that in Piety and Vertue, by all means within his power, by exhortations and incouragements to all Vertue, by earneſt and vehement diſſwaſions from all ſin, and not only thus in general, but by applying to his particular wants, eſpecially by plain and friendly reproofs, where he knows or reaſonably believes there is any fault committed. This is of all others the moſt peculiar duty of a Friend, it being indeed that which none elſe is qualified for. Such an unwillingneſs there is in moſt Men to hear of their faults, that thoſe that undertake that work, had need have a great pre-poſſeſſion of their hearts, to make them patient of it. Nay, it is ſo generally acknowledged to be the proper work of a Friend, that if he omit it, he betrays the offender into ſecurity; his not reproving will be apt to make the other think he does nothing worthy of reproof, and ſo he tacitly acts that baſeſt part of a flatterer, ſooths and cheriſhes him in this ſin; when yet farther it is conſidered how great need all men have at ſome time or other of being admoniſhed, 'twill appear moſt unfriendly, yea, a cruel thing to omit it. We have that natural partiality to our ſelves that we cannot ſo readily diſcern our own miſcarriages, as we do other mens, and therefore 'tis very neceſſary they ſhould ſometimes be ſhewed us by thoſe, who ſee them more clearly; and the doing this at the firſt may prevent the multiplying of more: whereas if we be ſuffered to go unreproved, it often comes to ſuch a habit that reproofs will do no good. And then how ſhall that perſon be able to anſwer it either to God or himſelf, that has by his ſilence betrayed his friend to this greateſt miſchief? 'Tis the expreſſion of God himſelf ſpeaking of a friend, *Thy Friend which is as thine own ſoul, Deut.* 13. 6. And ſure we ſhould in this reſpect account our Friends as our own Souls, by having the ſame jealous tenderneſs and watchfulneſs over their Souls, which we ought to have of our own. It will therefore be very fit for all that have entred any ſtrict friendſhip, to make this one ſpecial Article in the agreement, that they ſhall mutually admoniſh and reprove each other; by which means it will become ſuch an avowed part of their friendſhip, that it can never be miſtaken by the reproved party for cenſoriouſneſs or unkindneſs. *Admonition.*

Prayer. 23. Fourthly, To theſe ſeveral parts of kindneſs muſt be added that of Prayer; we muſt not only aſſiſt our friends, our ſelves, in that we can, but we muſt call in the Almighty's aid to them, recommending them earneſtly to God for all his bleſſings, both Temporal and Spiritual.

Conſtancy. 24. Laſtly, We muſt be conſtant in our friendſhips, and not out of a lightneſs of humour grow weary of a Friend, only becauſe we have had him long. This is great injuſtice to him, who, if he have behaved him well, ought the more to be valued, by how much the longer he has continued to do ſo: And it is great folly in our ſelves, for it is the caſting away the greateſt treaſure of humane life, for ſuch certainly is a tried friend. The wiſeſt of men gives warning of it, *Prov. 27. 16. Thine own friend and thy fathers friend forſake not.* Nay, farther, 'tis not every light offence of a friend, that ſhould make thee renounce his friendſhip, there muſt be ſome allowance made to the infirmities of Men, and if thou haſt occaſion to pardon him ſomewhat to day, perhaps thou mayeſt give him opportunity to requite thee to morrow; therefore nothing but unfaithfulneſs, or incorrigible Vice ſhould break this band.

Servants owe to their Maſters Obedience. 25. The laſt relation is that between Maſters and Servants, both which owe duty to each other. That of the Servant is firſt Obedience to all lawful commands; this is expreſly required by the Apoſtle, *Epheſ. 6. 6. Servants obey in all things your Maſters,* &c. And this Obedience muſt not be a grumbling and unwilling one, but ready and chearful, as he there proceeds to exhort, Verſe 7. *with good will doing ſervice*; and to help them herein, they are to conſider, that it is to the Lord, and not unto Men. God has commanded Servants thus to obey their Maſters; and therefore the obedience they pay is to God, which may well make them do it chearfully, how harſh or unworthy ſoever the Maſter be, eſpecially if what the Apoſtle farther urgeth, Verſe 8. be conſidered, *That there is a reward to be expected from God for it.*

Fidelity. 26. The ſecond duty of the Servant is faithfulneſs, and that may be of two ſorts; one as oppoſed to Eye-ſervice, the other to purloyning or defrauding. The firſt part of faithfulneſs is the doing of all true Service to his Maſter, not only when his Eye is over him, and he expects puniſhment for the omiſſion, but at all times, even when his Maſter is not likely to diſcern his failing; and that Servant that doth not make Conſcience of this is far from being a faithful Servant, this Eye-ſervice being by the Apoſtle ſet oppoſite to that ſingleneſs of heart, which he requires of Servants, *Eph. 6. 5.* The ſecond ſort of faithfulneſs conſiſts in the honeſt managery of all things intruſted to him by his Maſter, the not waſting his Goods (as the unjuſt Steward was accuſed to have done, *Luke 16.*) whether by careleſs embezelling of them, or by converting any of them to his own uſe without the allowance of his Maſter. This latter is that purloyning of which the Apoſtle warns Servants, *Tit. 2. 10.* and is indeed no better than arrant Theft; of this kind are all thoſe ways that the Servant hath of gaining to himſelf, by the loſs and damage of his Maſter, as the being bribed to make ill bargains for him, and many the like: Nay, indeed this ſort of unfaithfulneſs is worſe than common Theft, by how much there is a greater truſt repoſed, the betraying whereof adds to the crime. As for the other ſort of unfaithfulneſs, that of waſting, though without gain to themſelves, it differs not much in effect from this, the Maſter may loſe as much by the one as the other, and then what odds is it to him, whether he be robbed by the covetouſneſs or negligence of his Servant? And it is ſtill the ſame breach of truſt with the former; for every Maſter is ſuppoſed to intruſt his affairs as well to the care as the honeſty of his Servant: For 'twould be little advantage to the Maſter to be ſecured that his Servant would not himſelf cheat him, whilſt in the mean time he would by his careleſneſs give opportunities to others to do it: Therefore he that does not carefully look to his Maſter's Profit, deceives his Truſt, as well as he that unjuſtly provides for his own.

Submiſſion to rebuke.

27. A third Duty of a Servant is Patience and Meekneſs under the reproofs of his Maſter, ***not anſwering again,*** as the Apoſtle exhorts, *Tit.* 2. 9. that is, not making ſuch ſurly and rude replies, as may increaſe the Maſter's diſpleaſure, a thing too frequent among Servants, even in the juſteſt reprehenſions; whereas S. *Peter* directs them patiently to ſuffer even the moſt undeſerved correction, even when they *do well and ſuffer for it,* 1 *Pet.* 2. 20. But the patient ſuffering of rebuke is not all that is required of Servants in this matter, they muſt alſo mend the fault they are rebuked for, and not think they have done enough, when they have (though never ſo dutifully) given the Maſter the hearing.

Diligence.

28. A fourth duty of a Servant is Diligence: He muſt conſtantly attend to all thoſe things, which are the duties of his place, and not give himſelf to idleneſs and ſloth, nor yet to company-keeping, gaming, or any other diſorderly courſe, which may take him off from his Maſter's buſineſs. All theſe are neceſſary duties of a Servant, which they are carefully and conſcionably to perform, not ſo much to eſcape the Maſter's anger as God's, who will certainly call every one of them to an account, how they have behaved themſelves towards their earthly Maſters.

Maſters owe to their Servants Juſtice.

39. Now on the other ſide, there are ſome things alſo oweing from the Maſters to their Servants: As firſt, The Maſter is bound to be juſt to them, in performing thoſe conditions on which they were hired; ſuch are commonly the giving them food and wages, and that Maſter that withholds theſe, is an Oppreſſor.

Admo

30. Secondly, The Maſter is to admoniſh and reprove the Servant in caſe of fault, and that not only in faults againſt them, wherein few Maſters are backward, but alſo and more eſpecially in fauls againſt God, whereat every Maſter ought to be more troubled than at thoſe which tend only to his own loſs, or inconvenience; the diſhonour of God, and the hazard of the meaneſt Man's Soul, being infinitely more worthy our diſquiet, than any thing of the other kind can be. And therefore when Maſters are preſently on fire for any little negligence or fault of a Servant towards themſelves, and yet can without trouble ſee them run into the greateſt ſins againſt God, 'tis a ſign they conſider their own concernments too much, and God's glory and their Servants Souls too little. This is too commonly the temper of Maſters, they are generally careleſs how their Servants behave themſelves towards God, how diſordered and profane their Families are, and therefore never beſtow any exhortation, or admonition to perſwade them to Vertue, or draw them from Vice; ſuch Maſters forget that they muſt one day give an account how they have governed their Families. It is certainly the duty of every Ruler to endeavour to advance Piety and Godlineſs among all thoſe that are under his charge, and that as well in this leſſer dominion of a Family, as in the greater of a Realm or Nation. Of this ***David*** was ſo careful that we ſee he profeſſes, *Pſalm* 101. 7. ***That no deceitful perſon ſhould dwell in his houſe, that he that told lyes ſhould not tarry in his ſight***; ſo much he though himſelf bound to provide, that his Family might be a kind of Church, an aſſembly of godly upright perſons: And if all Maſters would endeavour to have theirs ſo, they would

beſides the Eternal reward of it hereafter, find a preſent benefit by it, their worldly buſineſs would thrive much the better; for if their Servants were brought to make Conſcience of their ways, they would then not dare either to be negligent or falſe.

31. But as it is the duty of Maſters to admoniſh and reprove their Servants, ſo they muſt alſo look to do it in a due manner, that is, ſo as may be moſt likely to do good, not in paſſion and rage, which can never work the Servant to any thing but the deſpiſing or hating him; but with ſuch ſober and grave ſpeeches, as may convince him of his fault, and may alſo aſſure him, that it is a kind deſire of his amendment (and not a willingneſs to wreck his own rage) which makes the Maſter thus to rebuke him.

Good example. 32. A third duty of the Maſter is to ſet good example of honeſty and godlineſs to his Servants, without which 'tis not all the exhortations or reproofs he can uſe will ever do good; or elſe he pulls down more with his example, than 'tis poſſible for him to build with the other, and 'tis madneſs for a drunken or prophane Maſter to expect a ſober and godly Family.

Means of Inſtruction. 33. Fourthly, The Maſter is to provide that his Servants may not want means of being inſtructed in their duty, as alſo that they may daily have conſtant times of worſhipping God publickly, by having Prayers in the Family: But of this I have ſpoken before under the head of Prayer, and therefore ſhall here ſay no more of it.

Moderation in Command. 34. Fifthly, The Maſter in all affairs of his own, is to give reaſonable and moderate commands, not laying greater burthens on his Servants, than they are able to bear, particularly not requiring ſo much work, that they ſhall have no time to beſtow on their Souls; as on the other ſide he is not to permit them to live ſo idly as may make them either uſeleſs to him, or may betray themſelves to any ill.

Encouragement in well-doing. 35. Sixthly, The Maſter is to give his Servants encouragement in well doing, by uſing them with that bounty and kindneſs which their faithfulneſs and diligence, and piety deſerves; and finally in all his dealing with them, he is to remember that himſelf hath, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Epheſ.6.9. a Maſter in Heaven,* to whom he muſt give an account of the uſage of his meaneſt Servant on Earth. Thus I have briefly run through thoſe ſeveral Revelations to which we owe particular Duty, and ſo have done with that firſt branch of Duty to our Neighbours, that of Juſtice.

SUNDAY XVI.

Other Branches of our Duty to our Neighbour. Of Charity to Mens Souls, Bodies, Goods and Credit.

Charity. *Sect.* I. THE ſecond branch of Duty to our Neighbours, is Charity, or Love. This is the great Goſpel-duty ſo often enjoyned us by Chriſt; the *New Commandment,* as himſelf calls it, *John* 13. 14. *that ye love one another,* and this is again repeated twice in one Chapter, *John* 15. 12, 17. and the firſt Epiſtle of S. *John* is almoſt wholly ſpent in the perſwaſion of this one duty; by which we may ſee it is no matter of indifference, but moſt ſtrictly required of all that profeſs Chriſt. Indeed himſelf has given it as the badge and livery of his Diſciples, *John* 13.35. *By this ſhall all men know ye are my Diſciples, if ye have love one to another.*

This

In the Affections.

This Charity may be conſidered two ways; firſt, in reſpect of the Affections, ſecondly, of the Actions; Charity in the Affections is a ſincere kindneſs, which diſpoſes us to wiſh all good to others, and that in all their capacities, in the ſame manner that Juſtice obligeth us to wiſh no hurt to any Man, in reſpect either of his Soul, his Body, his Goods, or his Credit; ſo this firſt part of Charity binds us to wiſh all good to them in all theſe.

To mens Souls.

And firſt for the Soul, If we have any the leaſt ſpark of Charity, we cannot but wiſh all good to mens Souls; thoſe precious things which Chriſt thought worth the ranſoming with his own bloud, may ſurely well challenge our kindneſs, and good wiſhes; and therefore if we do not thus love one another, we are far from obeying that command of loving as he hath loved; for 'twas the Souls of Men which he loved ſo tenderly, and both did and ſuffered ſo much for. Of this love of his to Souls there are two great and ſpecial effects: the firſt, The purifying them here by his Grace, the ſecond, The making them everlaſtingly happy in his Glory; and both theſe we are ſo far to copy out in our kindneſs, as to be earneſtly deſirous that all Men ſhould arrive to that Purity and Holineſs here, which may make them capable of Eternal Happineſs hereafter. It were to be hoped, that none, that himſelf carried a Soul about him, could be ſo cruel to that of another Man's, as not ſincerely to wiſh this, did not experience ſhew us there are ſome perſons, whoſe malice is ſo deviliſh, as to reach even to the direct contrary; the wiſhing not only the ſin, but the damnation of others. Thus may you have ſome, who, in any injury or oppreſſion they ſuffer, make it their only comfort, that their Enemies will damn themſelves by it; when alas! that ſhould to a Chriſtian be much more terrible, than any ſuffering they could bring upon him. He that is of this temper, is a diſciple of Satan, not of Chriſt, it being directly contrary to the whole ſcope of that grand Chriſtian precept, of *loving our neighbours as our ſelves.* For it is ſure, no Man that believes there is ſuch a thing as damnation, wiſhes it to himſelf; be he never ſo fond of the ways that lead to it, yet he wiſhes that may not be his journeys end; and therefore by that rule of Charity ſhould as much dread it for his Neighbour.

To their Bodies, Goods and Credit.

Secondly, We are to wiſh all good to the Bodies of Men, all health and welfare; we are generally tender enough of our own Bodies, dread the leaſt pain or ill, that can befal them: Now Charity, by vertue of the forementioned Precept, extends this tenderneſs to all others: and whatever we apprehend as grievous to our ſelves, we muſt be unwilling ſhould befal another. The like is to be ſaid of the other two, Goods and Credit, that as we wiſh our own thriving and reputation, ſo we ſhould likewiſe that of others, or elſe we can never be ſaid to *love our neighbour as our ſelves.*

Effects of this Charity.

This Charity of the Affections, if it be ſincere, will certainly have theſe ſeveral effects, which are ſo inſeparable from it, that they are often in Scripture accounted as parts of the duty, and ſo moſt ſtrictly required of us; Firſt, It will keep the mind in a peaceable and meek temper towards others, ſo far from ſeeking occaſion of contentions, that no provocation ſhall draw us to it; for where we have kindneſs we ſhall be unapt to quarrel, it being one of the ſpecial qualities of Charity, that it is *not eaſily provoked,* 1 *Cor.* 13. 5. And therefore whoever is unpeaceable, ſhews his heart is deſtitute of this Charity. Secondly, It will breed compaſſion towards all the miſeries of others; every miſ-hap that befals where we wiſh well, is a kind of defeat and diſaſter to our ſelves; and therefore if we wiſh well to all, we ſhall be thus concerned in the calamities of all, have a real grief and ſorrow to ſee any in miſery, and that according to the proportion of the ſuffering. Thirdly, It will give us joy in the proſperities of others. *Solomon* obſerves, *Prov.* 13. 19. That *the deſire accompliſhed is ſweet to the ſoul*; and then whoever has this real deſire of his Neighbour's welfare, his deſire is accompliſhed in their proſperity, and therefore he cannot but have contentment and ſatisfaction in it. Both theſe are together commanded by S. *Paul*, Rom. 12. 12. *Rejoyce with them that rejoyce, weep with them that weep.* Fourthly, It will excite and ſtir up our Prayers for others; we are of our ſelves impotent, feeble creatures, unable to beſtow bleſſings; where we moſt wiſh them, therefore if we do indeed deſire the good of others we muſt ſeek it on their behalf from him, whence every *good and perfect gift cometh*, *James* 1. 17. This is ſo neceſſary a part of Charity, that without it our kindneſs is but an inſignificant thing, a kind of empty complement. For how can he be believed to wiſh well in earneſt, who will not thus put life and efficacy into his wiſhes, by forming them into Prayers, which will otherwiſe be vain and fruitleſs? The Apoſtle thought not fit to leave Men to their bare wiſhes, but exhorts that Supplications, Prayers and giving of Thanks *be made for all men*, 1 *Tim.*2.1. which Precept all that have this true Charity of the heart, will readily conform to. Theſe ſeverals are ſo naturally the fruits of this Charity, that it is a deceit for any Man to perſwade himſelf he hath it, who cannot produce theſe fruits to evidence it by.

It caſts out Envy.

But there is yet a farther excellency of this grace; it guards the Mind, and ſecures it from ſeveral great and dangerous Vices; as firſt, from Envy: this is by the Apoſtle taught us to be the property of Charity, 1 *Cor.* 13. 4. *Charity envyeth not*; and indeed common reaſon may confirm this to us, for envy is a ſorrow at the proſperity of another, and therefore muſt needs be directly contrary to that deſire of it, which we ſhewed before was the effect of love; ſo that if love bear ſway in the heart, 'twill certainly chaſe out envy. How vainly then do thoſe pretend to this Vertue, that are ſtill grudging, and repining at every good hap of others?

Pride.

Secondly, It keeps down Pride and Haughtineſs. This is alſo taught us by the Apoſtle in the forementioned place, *Charity vaunteth not it ſelf, is not puffed up*; and accordingly we find, that where this vertue of love is commanded, there humility is joyned with it. Thus it is, *Col.* 3. 12. *Put on therefore bowels of Mercies, Kindneſs, Humbleneſs of mind*; and *Rom.* 12. 10. *Be kindly affectioned one towards another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another*, where you ſee how cloſe an attendant Humility is of Love. Indeed it naturally flows from it, for Love always ſets a price and value upon the thing beloved, makes us eſteem and prize it; thus we too conſtantly find it in ſelf-love, it makes us think highly of our ſelves, that we are much more excellent than other Men. Now if love thus plac'd on our ſelves, beget Pride, let us but divert the courſe, and turn this Love on our Brethren, and it will as ſurely beget Humility, for then we ſhould ſee and value thoſe gifts and excellencies of theirs, which now our Pride, or our hatred makes us to over-look and neglect, and not think it reaſonable either to deſpiſe them, or vaunt and magnifie our ſelves upon ſuch a compariſon; we ſhould certainly find cauſe to put the Apoſtles exhortation in practice, *Phil.* 2.4. That we ſhould *eſteem others better than our ſelves.* Whoever therefore is of ſo haughty a temper, as to vilifie and diſdain others, may conclude, he hath not this charity rooted in his heart.

Thirdly,

Cenſoriouſneſs.

Thirdly, It caſts out Cenſoriouſneſs and raſh Judging; Charity, as the Apoſtle ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 13. 5. *thinketh no evil*; is not apt to entertain ill conceits of others, but on the contrary, as it follows, Verſe 7. *Believeth all things, hopeth all things*; that is, it is forward to believe and hope the beſt of all Men; and ſurely our own experience tells us the ſame, for where we love we are uſually unapt to diſcern faults, be they never ſo groſs (witneſs the great blindneſs we generally have towards our own) and therefore ſhall certainly not be like to create them, where they are not, or to aggravate them beyond their true ſize and degree: And then to what ſhall we impute thoſe unmerciful Cenſures and raſh Judgments of others, ſo frequent among Men, but to the want of this Charity?

Diſſembling.

Fourthly, It caſts out Diſſembling and feigned kindneſs; where this true and real love is, that falſe and counterfeit one flies from before it, and this is the Love we are commanded to have, ſuch as *is without diſſimulation, Rom.* 12. 9. Indeed where this is rooted in the heart, there can be no poſſible uſe of diſſimulation, becauſe this is in truth all that the falſe one would ſeem to be, and ſo is as far beyond it as Nature is beyond Art; nay indeed as a divine vertue is beyond a foul ſin, for ſuch is that hypocritical kindneſs; and yet 'tis to be feared, that does too generally uſurp the place of this real Charity; the effects of it are too viſible among us, there being nothing more common than to ſee Men make large profeſſions to thoſe whom as ſoon as their backs are turned, they either deride or miſchief.

Self-ſeeking.

Fifthly, It caſts out all mercenarineſs, and ſelf-ſeeking: 'Tis of ſo noble and generous temper, that it deſpiſes all projectings for gain or advantage, *Love ſeeketh not her own*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 5. And therefore that huckſtering kind of Love ſo much uſed in the World, which places it ſelf only there, where it may fetch in benefit, is very far from this Charity.

Revenge.

Laſtly, It turns out of the heart all malice and deſire of Revenge, which is ſo utterly contrary to it, that it is impoſſible they ſhould both dwell in the ſame breaſt; 'tis the property of Love to *bear all things*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 7. to endure the greateſt injuries, without thought of making any other return to them than Prayers and Bleſſings, and therefore the malicious revengeful perſon is of all others the greateſt ſtranger to this Charity.

This Charity to be extended even to Enemies.

'Tis true if this Vertue were to be exerciſed but towards ſome ſort of perſons, it might conſiſt with malice to others, it being poſſible for a Man that bitterly hates one, to love another: But we are to take notice that this Charity muſt not be ſo confined, but muſt extend and ſtretch it ſelf to all Men in the World, particularly to Enemies, or elſe it is not that Divine Charity commended to us by Chriſt. The loving of Friends and Benefactors is ſo low a pitch, that the very Publicans and Sinners, the worſt of Men, were able to attain to it, *Matth.* 5. 46. And therefore 'tis not counted rewardable in a Diſciple of Chriſt; no he expects we ſhould ſoar higher, and therefore hath ſet us this more Spiritual and excellent Precept of loving of Enemies, *Matth.* 4. 44. *I ſay unto you, love your Enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you*, and whoſoever does not thus, will never be owned by him for a Diſciple. We are therefore to conclude, that all which hath been ſaid concerning this Charity of the Affections, muſt be underſtood to belong as well to our ſpitefulleſt Enemy, as our moſt obliging Friend: but becauſe this is a duty to which the froward nature of Man is apt to object much, 'twill not be amiſs to inſiſt a little on ſome Conſiderations which may enforce it on us.

Motives thereunto, Command of Chriſt.

And firſt, conſider what hath been already toucht on, that it is the Command of Chriſt, both in the Texts above mentioned, and multitudes of others; there being ſcarce any Precept ſo often repeated in the New Teſtament, as this of loving and forgiving of our Enemies. Thus *Epheſ.* 4. 32. *Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another*; And again, *Col.* 3. 13. *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any, even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.* So alſo, 1 *Pet.* 3. 9. *Not rendring evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwiſe Bleſſings.* A whole Volume of Texts might be brought to this purpoſe, but theſe are certainly enough to convince any Man, that this is ſtrictly required of us by Chriſt, and indeed I think, there are few that ever heard of the Goſpel, but know it is ſo. The more prodigiouſly ſtrange is it, that Men that call themſelves Chriſtians, ſhould give no degree of obedience to it, nay, not only ſo, but even publickly avow and profeſs the contrary, as we daily ſee they do, it being ordinary to have Men reſolve, and declare that we will not forgive ſuch, or ſuch a Man, and no conſideration of Chriſt's command can at all move them from their purpoſe. Certainly theſe Men underſtand not what is meant by the very word Chriſtian, which ſignifies a Servant and Diſciple of Chriſt, and this Charity is the very badge of the one, and leſſon of the other: And therefore 'tis the greateſt abſurdity, and contradiction, to profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, and yet at the ſame time to reſiſt this ſo expreſs Command of that Chriſt, whom they own as their Maſter. *If I be a Maſter*, ſaith God, *where is my fear? Mal.* 1. 6. Obedience and reverence are ſo much the duties of Servants, that no Man is thought to look on him as a Maſter, to whom he pays them not, *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I ſay?* ſaith Chriſt, *Luke* 6. 46. The whole world is divided into two great Families, Chriſt's and Satan's, and the obedience each Man pays, ſignifies to which of theſe Maſters he belongs; if he obey Chriſt, to Chriſt; if Satan, to Satan. Now this ſin of malice and revenge is ſo much the dictate of that wicked Spirit, that there is nothing can be a more direct obeying of him; 'tis the taking his Livery on our backs, the Proclamation whoſe Servants we are. What ridiculous impudence is it then, for Men that have thus entred themſelves of Satan's Family, to pretend to be the Servants of Chriſt; Let ſuch know aſſuredly, that they ſhall not be owned by him, but at the great day of account, be turned over to their proper Maſter, to receive their wages in Fire and Brimſtone.

Example of God.

A ſecond Conſideration is the example of God, this is an argument Chriſt himſelf thought fit to uſe, to impreſs this duty on us, as you may ſee, *Luk.* 6. 35, 36. Where after having given the Command of loving Enemies, he encourages to the practice of it, by telling, that it is that which will make us the *Children of the higheſt*, (that is, 'twill give us a likeneſs and reſemblance to him, as Children have to their Parents) *for he is kind to the unthankful and the evil*; And to the ſame purpoſe you may read, *Matth.* 5. 45. *He maketh his Sun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt*; and ſure this is a moſt forcible conſideration to excite us to this duty. God, we know, is the fountain of perfection, and the being like to him, is the ſumm of all we can wiſh for; and though it was *Lucifer*'s fall, his ambition to be like the moſt high, yet had the likeneſs he affected been only that of Holineſs and Goodneſs, he might ſtill have been an Angel of Light; This deſire of imitating our Heavenly Father is the eſpecial mark of a Child of his. Now this kindneſs and goodneſs to enemies is moſt eminently remarkable in God, and that not only in reſpect of the temporal Mercies, which he indifferently beſtows on all, his *Sun and Rain on the unjuſt*, as in the Text forementioned, but chiefly in his ſpiritual

Mercies. We are all by our wicked works, *Col.* 1, 21. *Enemies to him*, and the miſchief of that enmity would have fallen wholly upon our ſelves; God had no motive beſides that of his pity to us, to wiſh a reconciliation; yet ſo far was he from returning our enmity, when he might have revenged himſelf to our Eternal Ruine, that he deſigns and contrives how he may bring us to be at peace with him. This is a huge degree of mercy and kindneſs, but the means he uſed for effecting this, is yet far beyond it; He ſent his own Son from Heaven to work it, and that not only by perſwaſions, but ſufferings alſo; ſo much did he prize us miſerable Creatures, that he thought us not too dear bought with the blood of his Son. The like example of mercy and patience we have in Chriſt, both in *laying down his life for us enemies*, and alſo in that meek manner of doing it, which we find excellently ſet forth by the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 2. 22, 23, 24. and commended to our imitation. Now ſurely when all this is conſidered, we may well make S. *John*'s inference; *Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another*, 1 *John* 4. 11. How ſhameful a thing is it for us to retain diſpleaſures againſt our Brethren, when God thus lays by his towards us, and that when we have ſo highly provoked him.

The diſproportion between our offences againſt God, and mens againſt us.

This directs to a third Conſideration, the comparing our ſins againſt God, with the offences of our Brethren againſt us, which we no ſooner ſhall come to do, but there will appear a vaſt difference between them, and that in ſeveral reſpects: For firſt, There is the Majeſty of the Perſon againſt whom we ſin, which exceedingly increaſes the guilt, whereas between Man and Man, there cannot be ſo great a diſtance; for though ſome men are by God advanced to ſuch eminency of dignity as may make an injury offered to them the greater, yet ſtill they are but Men of the ſame Nature with us, whereas he is God bleſſed for ever. Secondly, There is his Soveraignty and Power, which is original in God, for we are his Creatures, we have received our whole Being from him, and therefore are in the deepeſt manner bound to perfect Obedience; whereas all the Soveraignty that one Man can poſſibly have over another, is but imparted to them by God, and for the moſt part there is none of this neither in the caſe, quarrels being moſt uſual among equals. Thirdly, There is his infinite bounty and goodneſs to us; all that ever we enjoy, whether in relation to this life or a better, being wholly his free gift, and ſo there is the fouleſt ingratitude added to our other crimes; in which reſpect alſo 'tis impoſſible for one man to offend againſt another in ſuch a degree; for though one may be (and too many are) guilty of unthankfulneſs towards men, yet becauſe the greateſt benefits that Man can beſtow, are infinitely ſhort of thoſe which God doth, the ingratitude cannot be near ſo great as towards God it is. Laſtly, There is the greatneſs and multitude of our ſins againſt God, which do infinitely exceed all that the moſt injurious Man can do againſt us; for we all ſin much oftner and more hainouſly againſt him, than any man, be he never ſo malicious, can find opportunities of injuring his Brethren. This inequality and diſproportion our Saviour intimates in the Parable, *Matth.* 18. where our offences againſt God are noted by the ten thouſand Talents, whereas our Brethrens againſt us are deſcribed by the hundred Pence; a Talent hugely out-weighs a Penny and ten thouſand out-numbers a hundred, yet ſo and much more does the weight and number of our ſins exceed all the offences of others againſt us. Much more might be ſaid to ſhew the vaſt inequality between the faults which God forgives us, and thoſe we can poſſibly have to forgive our Brethren: But this I ſuppoſe may ſuffice to ſilence all the objections of cruel and revengeful Perſons, againſt this kindneſs to enemies. They are apt to look upon it as an abſurd and unreaſonable thing, but ſince God himſelf acts it in ſo much an higher degree, who can without blaſphemy ſay 'tis unreaſonable? If this, or any other Spiritual Duty appear ſo to us, we may learn the reaſon from the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. *The carnal man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him*; 'tis the carnality and fleſhlineſs of our hearts that makes it ſeem ſo, and therefore inſtead of diſputing againſt the Duty, let us purge our hearts of that, and then we ſhall find that true which the Spiritual Wiſdom affirms of her Doctrines, *Prov.* 8. 9. *They are all plain to him that underſtandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.*

Pleaſantneſs of this duty.

Nay, This loving of Enemies is not only a reaſonable, but a pleaſant duty, and that I ſuppoſe as a fourth Conſideration; there is a great deal of ſweetneſs and delight to be found in it. Of this, I confeſs, none can ſo well judge as thoſe that have practiſed it, the nature even of Earthly pleaſures being ſuch, that 'tis the enjoyment only that can make a Man truly know them. No Man can ſo deſcribe the taſte of any delicious thing to another, as that by it he ſhall know the reliſh of it: He muſt firſt actually taſte it: And ſure 'tis much more ſo in Spiritual Pleaſures, and therefore he that would fully know the ſweetneſs and pleaſantneſs of this Duty, let him ſet to the practice, and then his own experience will be the beſt informer. But in the mean time how very unjuſt, yea, and fooliſh is it, to pronounce ill of it before trial? For men to ſay, This is irkſom and intolerable, who never ſo much as once offered to try whether indeed it were ſo or no? Yet by this very means an ill opinion is brought up of this moſt delightful Duty, and paſſes currant among men, whereas in all juſtice the teſtimony of it ſhould be taken only from thoſe who have tried it: And they would certainly give another account of it.

But though the full knowledge hereof be to be had only by this nearer acquaintance, yet methinks even thoſe who look at it but at a diſtance may diſcern ſomewhat of amiableneſs in it, if no other way, yet at leaſt by comparing it with the uneaſineſs of its contrary. Malice and Revenge are the moſt reſtleſs, tormenting paſſions that can poſſeſs the mind of a Man, they keep men in perpetual ſtudy and care how to effect their miſchievous purpoſes, it diſturbs their very ſleep, as *Solomon* obſerves, *Prov.* 4. 16. *They ſleep not except they have done miſchief, and their ſleep is taken away, except they cauſe ſome to fall:* Yea, it imbitters all the good things they enjoy, ſo that they have no taſte or reliſh of them. A remarkable example of this we have in *Haman*, who though he abounded in all the greatneſs and felicity of the World, yet the malice he had to a poor deſpicable Man, *Mordecai*, kept him from taſting contentment in all this, as you may ſee *Eſther* 5. where after he had related to his Friends all his proſperities, *Verſe* 11. he concludes thus, *Verſe* 12. *Yet all this availeth me nothing, ſo long as I ſee* Mordecai *the Jew ſitting in the King's Gate.* On the other ſide, the peaceable Spirit, that can quietly paſs by all injuries and affronts, enjoys a continual calm, and is above the malice of his Enemies; for let them do what they can, they cannot rob him of his quiet, he is firm as a rock, which no ſtorms or winds can move, when the furious and revengeful Man is like a wave, which the leaſt blaſt toſſes and tumbles from its place. But beſides this inward diſquiet of revengeful men, they often bring many outward calamities upon themſelves, they exaſperate their Enemies, and provoke them to do them greater miſchiefs, nay, oftentimes they willingly run themſelves upon the greateſt miſeries in purſuit of their revenge, to which 'tis ordinary to ſee men ſacrifice Goods, Eaſe, Credit, Life, nay, Soul it ſelf, not caring what they ſuffer themſelves, ſo they may ſpite their Enemy; ſo ſtrangely does this wretched humour beſot and blind them. On the contrary, the meek perſon he often melts his adverſary, pacifies his anger; *A ſoft anſwer turneth away wrath,* ſaith *Solomon, Prov.* 15. 1. And ſure there is nothing can tend more to that end; but if it do happen that his Enemy be ſo inhumane, that he miſs of doing that, yet he is ſtill a gainer by all he can ſuffer. For firſt, he gains an opportunity of exerciſing that moſt Chriſtian Grace of Charity and forgiveneſs, and ſo at once of obeying the command, and imitating the example of his Saviour which is to a true Chriſtian Spirit a moſt valuable advantage; and then ſecondly, He gains an acceſſion and increaſe to his reward hereafter. And if it be objected, that that is to be reckoned in to the preſent pleaſure of the Duty: I anſwer, That the expectation and belief of it is, and that alone is a delight infinitely more raviſhing than the preſent enjoyment of all ſenſual pleaſure can be.

If we forgive not, God will not forgive us.

The fourth Conſideration is, the dangers of not performing this Duty; of which I might reckon up divers, but I ſhall inſiſt only on that great one, which contains in it all the reſt, and that is the forfeiting of our own pardons from God, the having our ſins againſt him kept ſtill on his ſcore and not forgiven. This is a Conſideration, that methinks ſhould affright us into good nature; if it do not, our malice is greater to our ſelves than to our Enemies. For alas! what hurt is it poſſible for thee to do to another, which can bear any compariſon with that thou doeſt thy ſelf, in loſing the pardon of thy ſins? which is ſo unſpeakable a miſchief, that the Devil himſelf with all his malice cannot wiſh a greater. 'Tis all he aims at, firſt, that we may ſin, and then that thoſe ſins may never be pardoned, for then he knows he has us ſure enough; Hell, and damnation being certainly the portion of every unpardoned ſinner, beſides all other effects of God's Wrath in this Life. Conſider this, and then tell me what thou haſt got by the higheſt revenge thou ever actedſt upon another. 'Tis a Deviliſh phraſe in the mouth of Men, *that revenge is ſweet:* but is it poſſible there can be (even to the moſt diſtemperate Palate) any ſuch ſweetneſs in it, as may recompence that everlaſting bitterneſs that attends it? 'Tis certain no Man in his wits can upon ſober judging, imagine there is. But alas! we give not our ſelves time to weigh things, but ſuffer our ſelves to be hurried away with the heat of an angry humour, never conſidering how dear we muſt pay for it: like the ſilly Bee, that in anger leaves at once her ſting and her life behind her; the ſting may perhaps give ſome ſhort pain to the fleſh it ſticks in, but yet there is none but diſcerns the Bee has the worſt of it, that pays her life for ſo poor a revenge: So it is in the greateſt act of our malice, we may perhaps leave our ſtings in others, put them to ſome preſent trouble, but that compared with the hurt redounds to our ſelves by it, is no more than that inconſiderable pain is to death; Nay, not ſo much, becauſe the miſchiefs that we bring upon our ſelves are Eternal, to which no finite thing can bear any proportion. Remember then, whenſoevet thou art contriving and plotting a revenge, that thou quite miſtakeſt the mark; that thou thinkeſt to hit the Enemy, and alas! thou woundeſt thy ſelf to death. And let no Man ſpeak peace to himſelf or think that theſe are vain terrors, and that he may obtain pardon from God, though he give none to his Brethren. For he that is truth it ſelf has aſſured us the contrary, *Matth.* 6. 15. *If ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes.* And leſt we ſhould forget the neceſſity of this duty, he hath inſerted it in our daily Prayers, where we make it the condition, on which we beg pardon from God; *Forgive us our treſpaſſes as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.* What a heavy curſe then does every revengeful Perſon lay upon himſelf, when he ſays this Prayer? He does in effect beg God not to forgive him; and 'tis too ſure that part of his Prayer will be heard, he ſhall be forgiven juſt as he forgives, that is, not at all. This is yet farther ſet out to us in the Parable of the Lord and the Servant, *Matth.* 18. The Servant had obtained of his Lord the forgiveneſs of a vaſt debt, ten Thouſand Talents, yet was ſo cruel to his fellow-ſervant, as to exact a poor trifling ſumm of an hundred Pence, upon which his Lord recals his former forgiveneſs, and charges him again with the whole debt; and this Chriſt applies to our preſent purpoſe, *Verſe* 35. *So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every man his Brother their treſpaſſes.* One ſuch act of uncharitableneſs is able to forfeit us the pardon God hath granted us, and then all our ſins return again upon us, and ſink us to utter ruine. I ſuppoſe it needleſs to heap up more teſtimonies of Scripture for the truth of this; theſe are ſo clear, as may ſurely ſerve to perſwade any Man, that acknowledges Scripture, of the great and fearful danger of this ſin of uncharitableneſs. The Lord poſſeſs all our hearts with ſuch a juſt ſenſe of it as may make us avoid it.

Gratitude to God. The laſt Conſideration I ſhall mention, is that of Gratitude. God has ſhewed wonderful mercies to us, Chriſt has ſuffered heavy things to bring us into a capacity of that mercy and pardon from God: And ſhall we not then think our ſelves obliged to ſome returns of thankfulneſs? If we will take the Apoſtle's judgment, he tells us, 2 *Cor.* 5. 15. *That ſince Chriſt died for us all, 'tis but reaſonable that we ſhould not henceforth live unto our ſelves, but unto him that died for us.* Indeed were every moment of our life conſecrated to his immediate Service, 'twere no more than common gratitude requires, and far leſs than ſuch ineſtimable benefits deſerve; what a ſhameful unthankfulneſs is it then to deny him ſo poor a ſatisfaction as this, the forgiving our Brethren? Suppoſe a man that were ranſomed either from death or ſlavery by the bounty and ſufferings of another, ſhould upon his releaſe be charg'd by him that ſo freed him, in return of that kindneſs of his, to forgive ſome ſlight debt, which was owing him by ſome third perſon, would you not think him the unthankfulleſt wretch in the world, that ſhould refuſe this ſo great a benefactor? Yet ſuch a wretch and much worſe is every revengeful perſon: Chriſt hath bought us out of Eternal Slavery, and that not with *corruptible things as Silver and Gold,* 1 Pet. 10. *but with his own moſt precious Blood,* and hath earneſtly recommended to us the Love of our Brethren, and that with the moſt moving arguments, drawn from the greatneſs of his Love to us; and if we ſhall obſtinately refuſe him in ſo juſt, ſo moderate a demand, how unſpeakable a vileneſs is it? And yet this we do down-right if we keep any malice or grudge to any perſon whatſoever. Nay farther, this is not barely an unthankfulneſs, but there is alſo joyned with it a horrible contempt and deſpiſing of him. This Peace and unity of Brethren was a thing ſo much prized and valued by him, that when he was to leave the **World,** he thought it the moſt precious thing he could bequeath, and therefore left it by way of Legacy to his Diſciples, *John* 14. 27. *Peace I leave with you.* We uſe to ſet a great value on the ſlighteſt beques of our dead friends, to be exceeding careful not to loſe them; and therefore if we wilfully bangle away this ſo precious a Legacy of Chriſt, 'tis a plain ſign we want that Love and eſteem of him, which we have of our Earthly Friends, and that we deſpiſe him as well as his Legacy. The great prevailing of this ſin of uncharitableneſs has made me ſtand thus long on theſe conſiderations, for the ſubduing it. *God grant they may make ſuch impreſſion on the Reader, as may be available to that purpoſe.*

The first riſing of Rancour to be ſuppreſt.

I ſhall add only this one advice, that theſe, or whatſoever other remedies againſt this ſin, muſt be uſed timely: 'Tis oft times the fruſtrating of bodily medicines, the applying them too late; and 'tis much oftner ſo in ſpiritual: Therefore if it be poſſible, let theſe and the like conſiderations be ſo conſtantly and habitually fixt in thy heart, that they may frame it to ſuch meekneſs, as may prevent all riſings of Rancor or Revenge in thee; for it is much better they ſhould ſerve as Armour to prevent, than as Balſom to cure the Wound. But if this paſſion be not yet ſo ſubdued in thee, but that there will be ſome ſtirrings of it, yet then be ſure to take it at the very firſt riſe, and let not thy fancy chew, as it were, upon the injury by often rolling it in thy mind, but remember betimes the foregoing Conſiderations, and withal, that this is a time and ſeaſon of trial to thee, wherein thou mayeſt ſhew thou haſt profited in Chriſt's School, there now being an opportunity offered thee either of obeying and pleaſing God, by paſſing by this offence of thy Brother, or elſe of obeying and pleaſing Satan, that lover of diſcord, by nouriſhing hatred againſt him. Remember this, I ſay, betimes, before thou be inflamed; for if this fire be throughly kindled, it will caſt ſuch a ſmoak, as will blind thy Reaſon, and make thee unfit to judge even in this ſo very plain a caſe, whether it be better by obeying God, to purchaſe to thy ſelf Eternal Bliſs; or by obeying Satan, Eternal Torments. Whereas, if thou put the queſtion to thy ſelf before this commotion and diſturbance of mind, 'tis impoſſible but thy underſtanding muſt pronounce for God; And then unleſs thou wilt be ſo perverſe that thou wilt deliberately chuſe death, thou wilt ſurely practiſe according to that ſentence of thy underſtanding. I ſhall add no more on this firſt part of Charity, that of the Affections.

Charity in the actions.

I proceed now to that of the Actions; And this indeed is it, whereby the former muſt be approved, we may pretend great Charity within, but if none break forth in the Actions, we may ſay of that Love, as S. *James* doth of the Faith he ſpeaks of, *that it is dead*, *Jam.* 2. 20. It is the Loving in deed, that muſt *approve our hearts before God*, 1 *John* 3. 18. Now this Love in the Actions may likewiſe fitly be diſtributed, as the former was, in relation to the four diſtinct capacities of our Brethren, their Souls, their Bodies, their Goods and Credit.

Towards the mind of our Neighbour.

The Soul, I formerly told you, may be conſidered either in a Natural or Spiritual Sence, and in both of them Charity binds us to do all the good we can. As the Soul ſignifies the Mind of a Man, ſo we are to endeavour the comfort and refreſhment of our Brethren, deſire to give them all true cauſe of joy and chearfulneſs; eſpecially when we ſee any under any ſadneſs or heavineſs, then to bring out all the Cordials we can procure, that is, to labour by all Chriſtian and fit means to chear the troubled Spirits of our Brethren, to *comfort them that are in any heavineſs*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 *Cor.* 1. 4.

His Soul.

But the Soul in the Spiritual Sence is yet of greater concernment, and the ſecuring of that is a matter of much greater moment, than the refreſhing of the mind only, in as much as the eternal ſorrows and ſadneſſes of Hell exceed the deepeſt ſorrows of this Life? and therefore though we muſt not omit the former, yet on this we are to employ our moſt zealous Charities; wherein we are not to content our ſelves with a bare wiſhing well to the

Souls of our Brethren, this alone is a ſluggiſh ſort of kindneſs, unworthy of thoſe who are to imitate the great Redeemer of Souls, who did and ſuffered ſo much in that purchaſe: No, we muſt add alſo our endeavour to make them that we wiſh them; to this purpoſe it were very reaſonable to propound to our ſelves in all our converſings with others, that one great deſign of doing ſome good to their Souls. If this purpoſe were fixt in our minds, we ſhould then diſcern perhaps many opportunities, which now we overlook, of doing ſomething towards it. The brutiſh ignorance of one would call upon thee to endeavour his inſtruction? the open ſin of another, to reprehend and admoniſh him: the faint and weak vertue of another, to confirm and encourage him. Every Spiritual want of thy Brother may give thee ſome occaſion of exerciſing ſome part of this Charity, or if thy circumſtances be ſuch, that upon ſober judging thou think it vain to attempt any thing thy ſelf, as if either thy meanneſs, or thy unacquaintedneſs, or any the like impediment be like to render thy exhortations fruitleſs, yet if thou art induſtrious in thy Charity, thou mayeſt probably find out ſome other inſtrument, by whom to do it more ſucceſsfully. There cannot be a nobler ſtudy than how to benefit mens Souls, and therefore where the direct means are improper, 'tis fit we ſhould whet our wits for attaining of others. Indeed 'tis a ſhame, we ſhould not as induſtriouſly contrive for this great Spiritual concernment of others, as we do for every worldly trifling intereſt of our own; yet in them we are unwearied, and try one means after another, till we compaſs our end. But if after all our ſerious endeavours, the obſtinacy of men do not ſuffer us, or themſelves rather, to reap any fruit from them, if all our wooings and intreatings of men to have mercy on their own Souls will not work on them, yet be ſure to continue ſtill to exhort by thy example. Let thy great care and tenderneſs of thy own Soul preach to them the value of theirs, and give not over thy compaſſions to them, but with the Prophet, *Jer.* 13. 17. *Let thy Soul weep in ſecret for them*; and with the *Pſalmiſt*, *Let Rivers of waters run down thine eyes, becauſe they keep not God's Law*, Pſal. 119. 136. Yea with Chriſt himſelf weep over them, *who will not know the things that belong to their peace*, *Luk.* 19. 42. And when no importunities with them will work, yet even then ceaſe not to importune God for them, that he will draw them to himſelf. Thus we ſee *Samuel*, when he could not diſſwade the people from that ſinful purpoſe they were upon, yet he profeſſes notwithſtanding, that he will not ceaſe praying for them; nay, he lookt on it as ſo much a duty, that it would be ſin for him to omit it, *God forbid*, ſays he, *that I ſhould ſin againſt the Lord in ceaſing to pray for you*, 1 *Sam.* 12. 23. Nor ſhall we need to fear that our Prayers will be quite loſt, for if they prevail not for thoſe for whom we pour them out, yet however they will return into our own boſoms, *Pſalm* 35. 13. we ſhall be ſure not to miſs of the reward of that Charity.

Charity in reſpect of the Body.

In the ſecond place, we are to exerciſe this Active Charity toward the Bodies of our Neighbours; we are not only to compaſſionate their pains and miſeries, but alſo to do what we can for their eaſe and relief. The good *Samaritan*, *Luk.* 10. had never been propoſed as our pattern, had he not as well helped as pitied the wounded Man. 'Tis not good wiſhes, no nor good words neither that avail in ſuch caſes, as S. *James* tells us, *If a Brother or Siſter be naked and deſtitute of daily food, and one of you ſay unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithſtanding ye give him not thoſe things that are needful for the Body, what doth it profit? James* 2. 15, 16. No ſure, it profits them nothing in reſpect of their Bodies, and it will profit thee as little in reſpect of thy Soul, it will never be reckoned to thee as a Charity. This relieving of the bodily wants of our Brethren, is a thing ſo ſtrictly required of us, that we find it ſet down, *Matth.* 25. as the eſpecial thing we ſhall be tried by at the Laſt day, on the omiſſion whereof is grounded that dreadful ſentence, *Verſe* 14. *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* And if it ſhall now be asked what are the particular acts of this kind which we are to perform, I think we cannot better inform our ſelves for the frequent and ordinary ones than from this Chapter, where are ſet down theſe ſeverals, *The giving meat to the hungry, and drink to the thirſty, harbouring the ſtranger, clothing the naked, and viſiting the ſick and impriſoned*; by which viſiting is meant not a bare coming to ſee them, but ſo coming as to comfort and relieve them; for otherwiſe it will be but like the *Levite* in the Goſpel, *Luke* 10. who came and *looked on the wounded man*, but did no more, which will never be accepted by God. Theſe are common and ordinary exerciſes of this Charity, for which we cannot want frequent opportunities. But beſides theſe there may ſometimes by God's eſpecial providence fall into our hands, occaſions of doing other good offices to the bodies of our Neighbours; we may ſometimes find a wounded Man with the *Samaritan*, and then 'tis our duty to do as he did; we may ſometimes find an innocent perſon condemned to death, as *Suſanna* was, and then are with *Daniel* to uſe all poſſible endeavour for their deliverances. This caſe *Solomon* ſeems to refer to, *Prov.* 24. 11. *If thou forbear to deliver him that is drawn unto death, and them that are ready to be ſlain; if thou ſayeſt, Behold we know it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart conſider? and he that keepeth the Soul, doth not he know it? ſhall not he render to every man according to his deeds?* We are not lightly to put off the matter with vain excuſes, but to remember that God, who knows our moſt ſecret thoughts, will ſeverely examine, whether we have willingly omitted the performance of ſuch a Charity. Sometimes again (nay, God knows often now a-days) we may ſee a Man that by a courſe of intemperance is in danger to deſtroy his health, to ſhorten his days, and then it is a due Charity not only to the Soul but to the Body alſo, to endeavour to draw him from it. It's impoſſible to ſet down all the poſſible acts of this corporal Charity, becauſe there may ſometimes happen ſuch opportunities as none can foreſee; we are therefore always to carry about us a ſerious reſolution of doing whatever good of this kind we ſhall at any time diſcern occaſion for, and then whenever that occaſion is offered, we are to look on it as a call, as it were from Heaven, to put that reſolution in practice. This part of Charity ſeems to be ſo much implanted in our Natures as we are Men, that we generally account them not only unchriſtian, but inhumane that are void of it; and therefore I hope there will not need much perſwaſion to it, ſince our very nature enclines us; but certainly that very conſideration will ſerve hugely to increaſe the guilt of thoſe that are wanting in it: For ſince this command is ſo agreeable even to fleſh and blood, our diſobedience to it can proceed from nothing but a ſtubbornneſs and reſiſtance againſt God who gives it.

SUNDAY XVII.

Of Charity; Alms-giving,&c. *Of Charity in reſpect of our Neighbour's Credit,*&c. *Of Peace-making: Of going to Law: Of Charity to our Enemies,* &c.

Charity in reſpect of the Goods.

Sect. 1. THE third way of expreſſing this Charity is towards the Goods or Eſtate of our Neighbour; we are to endeavour his thriving and proſperity in theſe outward good things; and to that end, be willing to aſſiſt, and further him in all honeſt ways of improving or preſerving them, by any Neighbourly and friendly office; Opportunities of this do many times fall out. A Man may ſometimes by his power or perſwaſion deliver his Neighbour's Goods out of the hands of a Thief or Oppreſſor; ſometimes again by his advice and counſel, he may ſet him in a way of thriving, or turn him from ſome ruinous courſe; and many other occaſions there may be of doing good turns to another, without any loſs or damage to our ſelves; and then we are to do them, even to our rich Neighbours, thoſe that are as wealthy (perhaps much more ſo) as our ſelves; for though Charity do not bind us to give to thoſe that want leſs than our ſelves, yet whenever we can further their profit without leſſening our own ſtore, it requires it of us: Nay, If the damage be but light to us in compariſon of the advantage to him, it will become us rather to hazard that light damage, than loſe him that greater advantage.

Towards the Rich.

Towards the Poor.

2. But towards our poor Brother, Charity ties us to much more; we are there only to conſider the ſupplying of his wants, and not to ſtick at parting with what is our own, to relieve him, but as far as we are able give freely what is neceſſary to him. This duty of Alms-giving is perfectly neceſſary for the approving our love not only to men, but even to God himſelf, as S. *John* tells us, 1 *John* 3. 17. *Whoſo hath this worlds goods, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* 'Tis vain for him to pretend to love either God or Man, who loves his Money ſo much better, that he will ſee his poor Brother (who is a Man, and bears the Image of God) ſuffer all extremities, rather than part with any thing to relieve him. On the other ſide, the performance of this duty is highly acceptable with God, as well as with Men.

3. 'Tis called, *Heb.* 13. 16. *A ſacrifice wherewith God is well pleaſed,* and again, *Phil.* 4. 18. S. *Paul* calls their Alms to him, *A Sacrifice acceptable, well pleaſing to God,* and the Church hath always look'd on it as ſuch; and therefore joyned it with the ſolemneſt part of worſhip, the holy Sacrament. But becauſe even Sacrifices themſelves under the Law, were often made unacceptable by being maimed and blemiſhed, it will here be neceſſary to enquire what are the due qualifications of this Sacrifice.

Motives of Alms-giving.

4. Of theſe there are ſome that reſpect the Motive, ſome the Manner of our giving. The Motive may be threefold, reſpecting God, our Neighbour and our Selves. That which reſpects God is obedience and thankfulneſs to him: He has commanded we ſhould give Alms, and therefore one ſpecial end of our doing ſo, muſt be the obeying that Precept of his. And it is from his bounty alone that we receive all our plenty, and this is the propereſt way of expreſſing our thankfulneſs for it, for as the *Pſalmiſt* ſaith, *our goodneſs extendeth not unto God, Pſalm* 16. 2. That tribute which we deſire to pay out of our eſtates, we cannot pay to his perſon. 'Tis the Poor, that are as it were his Proxy and receivers, and therefore whatever we ſhould by way of thankfulneſs

give back again unto God, our Alms is the way of doing it. Secondly, In reſpect of our Neighbour, the motive muſt be a true love and compaſſion to him, a tender ſellow-feeling of his wants, and deſire of his comfort and relief. Thirdly, In reſpect of our ſelves, the motive is to be the hope of that Eternal reward promiſed to this performance. This Chriſt points out to us; when he bids us *Lay up our treaſure in Heaven*, Matth. 6. 20. And to *make us friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs, that they may receive us into everlaſting habitations*, *Luke* 16. 9. that is, by a charitable diſpenſing of our temporal goods to the Poor, to lay up a ſtock in Heaven, to gain a title to thoſe endleſs felicities, which God hath promiſed to the charitable. That is the harveſt we muſt expect of what we ſow in theſe works of mercy, which will be ſo rich as would abundantly recompence us, though we ſhould as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. *Beſtow all our goods to feed the poor:* But then we muſt be ſure we make this our ſole aim, and not inſtead of this, propoſe to our ſelves the praiſe of Men, as the motive of our Charity, that will rob us of the other; This is expreſly told us by Chriſt, *Matth.* 6. They that ſet their hearts on the credit they ſhall gain with Men, muſt take that as their portion, *Verſe* 3. *Verily I ſay unto you, they have their reward*; they chuſe, it ſeems, rather to have Men their Pay-maſters, than God, and to them they are turn'd off; that little airy praiſe they get from them, is all the reward they muſt expect: *Ye have no reward of my Father which is in heaven, Verſe* 1. We have therefore need to watch our hearts narrowly, that this deſire of vain-glory ſteal not in, and befool us into that miſerable exchange of a vain blaſt of Mens breath for thoſe ſubſtantial and Eternal Joys of Heaven.

Manner of Alms-giving.

5. In the ſecond place, We muſt take care of our Alms-giving, in reſpect of the Manner; and in that, firſt, we muſt give Chearfully; Men uſually value a ſmall thing that is given Chearfully and with a good Heart, more than a much greater, that is wrung from a Man with grudging and unwillingneſs; and God is of the ſame mind, he loves a chearful giver, 2 *Cor.* 9. 7. which the Apoſtle makes the reaſon of the foregoing Exhortation, of not *giving grudgingly, or as of neceſſity, Ver. 6.* And ſure 'tis no unreaſonable thing, that is herein required of us, there being no duty that has to humane Nature more of pleaſure and delight, unleſs it be where covetouſneſs or cruelty have quite worked out the Man, and put a ravenous beaſt in his ſtead. Is it not a moſt raviſhing pleaſure to him that hath any bowels, to ſee the joy that a ſeaſonable Alms brings to a poor wretch; How it revives and puts new ſpirits in him, that was even ſinking? Certainly the moſt ſenſual Creature alive knows not how to beſtow his Money on any thing, that ſhall bring him in ſo great a delight, and therefore methinks it ſhould be no hard matter to give not only without grudging, but even with a great deal of alacrity and chearfulneſs, it being the fetching in of pleaſure to our ſelves.

Chearfully.

The fear of impoveriſhing our ſelves by it vain and impious.

6. There is but one Objection can be made againſt this, and that is that the danger of impoveriſhing ones ſelf by what one gives, may take off that pleaſure, and make men either not give at all, or not ſo chearfully. To this I anſwer: That firſt, were this hazard never ſo apparent, yet it being the Command of God that we ſhall thus give, we are yet to obey chearfully, and be as well content to part with our Goods in purſuance of this duty, as we are many times called to do upon ſome other. In which caſe Chriſt tells us, *He that forſakes not all that he hath, cannot be his Diſciple.*

7. But ſecondly, This is ſure a vain ſuppoſition, God having particularly promiſed the contrary to the Charitable; that it ſhall bring bleſſings on them, even in theſe outward things. *The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat, and he that watereth ſhall be watered alſo himſelf*, Prov. 11. 25. *He that giveth to the*

poor ſhall not lack, *Prov.* 28. 27. And many the like Texts there are, ſo that one may truly ſay, this objection is grounded in direct unbelief. The ſhort of it is, we dare not truſt God for this. Giving to the poor is directly the putting our Wealth into his hands; *He that giveth to the poor lendeth unto the Lord*, *Prov.* 19. 17. and that too on ſolemn promiſe of repayment, as it follows in that Verſe, *That which he hath given will he pay him again.* It is amongſt Men thought a great diſparagement, when we refuſe to truſt them; it ſhews we either think them not ſufficient, or not honeſt. How vile an affront is it then to God thus to diſtruſt him? Nay indeed, how horrid blaſphemy, to doubt the ſecurity of that, for which he has thus expreſly paſt his word, who is Lord of all, and therefore cannot be inſufficient, and who is the God of truth, and therefore will not fail to make good his promiſe? Let not then that Infidel fear of future want, contract and ſhut up thy bowels from thy poor Brother; for though he be never likely to pay thee, yet God becomes his Surety, and enters bond with him, and will moſt aſſuredly pay thee with increaſe. Therefore it is ſo far from being damage to thee, thus to give, that it is thy great advantage. Any Man would rather chuſe to put his Money in ſome ſure hand, where he may both improve, and be certain of it at his need, than to let it lie unprofitable by him, eſpecially if he be in danger of Thieves, or other accidents, by which he may probably loſe it. Now alas! all that we poſſeſs is in minutely danger of loſing; innumerable accidents there are, which may in an inſtant bring a rich man to beggary; he that doubts this, let him but read the ſtory of *Job*, and he will there find an example of it: And therefore what ſo prudent courſe can we take for our Wealth, as to put it out of the reach of thoſe accidents, by thus lending to God, where we may be ſure to find it ready at our greateſt need, and that too with improvement and increaſe? In which reſpect it is that the Apoſtle compares Alms to Seed, 2 *Cor.* 9. 10. We know it is the nature of Seed that is ſown, to multiply and increaſe, and ſo do all our acts of mercy, they return not ſingle and naked to us, but bring in their ſheaves with them, a moſt plenteous and bountiful harveſt. God deals not with our Alms, as we too often do with his Graces, wrap them up in a Napkin, ſo that they ſhall never bring in any advantage to us, but makes us moſt rich returns: and therefore we have all reaſon moſt chearfully, yea, joyfully to ſet to this duty, which we have ſuch invitations to, as well in reſpect of our own intereſts, as our Neighbours needs.

Give ſea-ſonably.

8. Secondly, We muſt give ſeaſonably: It is true indeed there are ſome ſo poor that an Alms can never come unſeaſonably, becauſe they always want, yet even to them there may be ſome eſpecial ſeaſons of doing it to their greater advantage; for ſometimes an Alms may not only deliver a poor Man from ſome preſent extremity, but by the right timing of it, may ſet him in ſome way of a more comfortable ſubſiſtance afterward. And for the moſt, I preſume it is a good rule, to diſpence what we intend to any, as ſoon as may be, for delays are hurtful often times both to them and our ſelves; firſt, as to them, it is ſure, the longer we delay the longer they groan under the preſent want, and after we have deſigned them a relief, it is in ſome degree a cruelty to defer beſtowing of it, for ſo long we prolong their ſufferings. You will think him a hard-hearted Phyſician, that having a certain cure for a Man in pain, ſhould, when he might preſently apply it, make unneceſſary delays, and ſo keep the poor Man ſtill in torture: and the ſame it is here; we want of the due compaſſion, if we can be content our poor Brother ſhould have one hour of unne-

ceſſary ſuffering, when we have preſent opportunity of relieving him: Or if he be not in ſuch an extremity of want, yet whatever we intend him for his greater comfort, he loſes ſo much of it, as the time of the delay amounts to. Secondly, In reſpect of our ſelves, 'tis ill to defer; for thereby we give advantage to the temptations either of Satan or our own covetous humour, to diſſwade us from it. Thus it fares too often with many Chriſtian Duties; for want of a ſpeedy execution, our purpoſes cool, and never come to act; ſo many reſolve they will repent, but becauſe they ſet not immediately upon it, one delay ſucceeds another, and keeps them from ever doing it at all; and ſo 'tis very apt to fall out in this caſe, eſpecially with men who are of a covetous temper, and therefore they of all others ſhould not truſt themſelves thus to delay.

9. Thirdly, We ſhould take care to give prudently, that is, to give moſt, *Prudently.* where it is moſt needed, and in ſuch a manner, as may do the receiver moſt good. Charities do often miſcarry for want of this care; for if we give at all adventures to all that ſeem to want, we may ſometimes give more to thoſe, whoſe ſloth and lewdneſs is the cauſe of their want, than to thoſe who beſt deſerve it, and ſo both encourage the one in their idleneſs, and diſable our ſelves from giving to the other. Yet I doubt not ſuch may be the preſent wants even of the moſt unworthy, that we are to relieve them; but where no ſuch preſſing need is, we ſhall do beſt to chuſe out the fitter objects of Charity, ſuch as are thoſe who either are not able to labour, or elſe have a greater charge than their labour can maintain, and to thoſe our Alms ſhould be given alſo in ſuch manner as may be moſt likely to do them good; the manner of which may differ according to the circumſtances of their condition; it may to ſome be beſt perhaps, to give them by little and little, to others the giving it all at once may tend more to their benefit; and ſometimes a ſeaſonable loan may do as well as a gift, and that may be in the power ſometimes of thoſe who are able to give but little: But when we thus lend on Charity, we muſt lend freely without Uſe, and alſo with a purpoſe, that if he ſhould prove unable to pay, we will forgive ſo much of the Principal as his needs require, and our abilities will permit. They want much of this Charity, who clap up poor Debtors in Priſon, when they know they have nothing to anſwer the Debt, which is a great cruelty, to make another miſerable, when nothing is gained to our ſelves by it.

10. Fourthly, We ſhould give liberally, we muſt not be ſtrait-handed in our Alms, and give by ſuch pitiful ſcantlings, as will bring almoſt no relief to the receiver, for that is a kind of mockery; 'tis as if one ſhould pretend to feed one that is almoſt famiſhed by giving him a crumb of bread; ſuch Doles as that would be moſt ridiculous, yet I fear 'tis too near the proportion of ſome mens Alms; ſuch Men are below thoſe Diſciples we read of, who knew only the Baptiſm of *John*; for 'tis to be obſerved, that *John* Baptiſt, who was but the forerunner of Chriſt, makes it a ſpecial part of his doctrine, that he *that hath two coats ſhould impart to him that hath none*, *Luke* 3. 11. He ſays not, He that hath ſome great Wardrobe, but even he that hath but two Coats muſt part with one of them; from whence we may gather, that whatſover is above (not our vanity, but) our need, ſhould thus be diſpoſed of, when our Brethrens neceſſity requires it. But if we look into the firſt time of the Goſpel, we ſhall find Chriſtianity far exceeded this proportion of *John*'s; the Converts aſſigned not a part only, but frankly *gave all to the uſe of the Brethren*, *Acts* 4. And though that being upon an extraordinary occaſion, will be no meaſure of our conſtant

practice, yet it may ſhew us how prime and fundamental a part of Chriſtianity, this of Charity is, that at the very firſt founding of the Church, ſuch vaſt degrees of it were practiſed; and if we farther conſider what Precepts of love are given us, in the Goſpel, even to the *laying down our lives for the brethren*, 1 *John* 3. 16. we cannot imagine our Goods are in God's account ſo much more precious than our lives, that he would command us to be prodigal of the one, and yet allow us to be ſparing of the other.

11. A multitude of Arguments might be brought to recommend this bounty to all that profeſs Chriſt; I ſhall mention only two, which I find uſed by S. *Paul* to the *Corinthians* on this occaſion. The firſt is the example of Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 8. 9. *For ye know the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.* Chriſt emptied himſelf of all that glory and greatneſs he enjoyed in Heaven with his Father, and ſubmitted himſelf to a life of ſo much meanneſs and poverty, only to enrich us. And therefore for ſhame, let us not grudge to empty our Coffers, to leſſen ſomewhat of our heaps to relieve his poor members. The ſecond is the expectation of reward, which will be more or leſs, according to the degrees of our Alms, 2 *Cor.* 9. 6. *He that ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap ſparingly, and he that ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap bountifully.* We think him a very improvident Husband-man, that to ſave a little Seed at preſent, ſows ſo thin, as to ſpoil his Crop; and the ſame folly 'twill be in us, if by the ſparingneſs of our Alms, we make our ſelves a lank harveſt hereafter, loſe either all, or a great part of thoſe rewards which God hath provided for the liberal Alms-giver. What is the proportion which may be called a liberal giving, I ſhall not undertake to ſet down, there being degrees even in liberality; one may give liberally, and yet another give more liberally than he; beſides, liberality is to be meaſured, not ſo much by what is given, as by the ability of the Giver. A man of a mean eſtate may give leſs than one of a great, and yet be the more liberal perſon, becauſe that little may be more out of his, than the greater is out of the others. Thus we ſee Chriſt pronounces the poor Widow to *have given much more to the Treaſury, than all the rich men, Luke* 21. 3. not that her two Mites were more than their rich Gifts, but that it was more for her, ſhe having left nothing behind, whereas they gave out of their abundance what they might eaſily ſpare. Every Man muſt herein judge for himſelf; we ſee the Apoſtle, though he earneſtly preſs the *Corinthians* to bounty, yet preſcribes not to them how much they ſhall give, but leaves that to their own breaſts, 2 *Cor.* 9. 7. *Every man according as he purpoſeth in his heart, ſo let him give.* But let us ſtill remember, that the more we give (provided we do not thereby fail in the ſupport of thoſe, that moſt immediately depend on us) the more acceptable it will be to God, and the more rewardable by him. And to ſecure the performance of the duty of Alms-giving (whatever the proportion be) we may do very well to follow the advice S. *Paul* gives the *Corinthians* in this matter, 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. *Upon the firſt day of the week let every one of you lay by him in ſtore as God hath proſpered him.* If Men would do thus, lay by ſomewhat weekly in ſtore for this work of Charity, it were the ſureſt way not to be unprovided of ſomewhat to give when an occaſion offered it ſelf, and by giving ſo by little and little, the expence would become leſs ſenſible, and ſo be a means to prevent thoſe grudgings and repinings, which are apt to attend Men in greater diſburſements; and ſure this were in other reſpects alſo a very proper courſe; for when a Tradeſman caſts up his weekly account, and ſees what his gains

have been, 'tis of all others the moſt ſeaſonable time to offer this tribute to God out of what he hath by His bleſſing gained. If any will ſay they cannot ſo well weekly reckon their Gains, as by longer ſpaces of time, I ſhall not contend with them for that preciſe time, let it be done monthly or quarterly, ſo it be done. But that ſomewhat ſhould ſtill be laid by in bank for theſe uſes, rather than left looſe to our ſudden Charities, is ſure very expedient; and I doubt not, whoever will make trial of it, will upon experience acknowledge it to be ſo.

Charity in reſpect of the Credit.

12. The fourth exerciſe of our Charity is towards the Credit of our Neighbour: And of this we may have many occaſions, ſometimes towards the innocent, and ſometimes alſo towards the guilty. If one whom we know to be an innocent perſon, be ſlandered, and traduced, Charity binds us to do what we may for the declaring his innocency,and delivering him from that falſe imputation, and that not only by witneſſing when we are called to it, but by a voluntary offering our teſtimony on his behalf, or if the accuſation be not before a Court of Juſtice, and ſo there be no place for that our more ſolemn teſtimony, but that it be only a ſlander toſt from one to another, yet even there we are to do what we can to clear him, by taking all occaſions publickly to declare what we know of his innocency: But even to the guilty there is ſome Charity of this kind to be performed, ſometimes by concealing the fault, if it be ſuch that no other part of Charity to others make it neceſſary to diſcover it, or it be not ſo notorious, as that it will be ſure to betray it ſelf. The wounds of Reputation are of all others the moſt incurable, and therefore it may well become Chriſtian Charity to prevent them, even where they have been deſerved; and perhaps ſuch a tenderneſs in hiding the fault may ſooner bring the offender to repentance, if it be ſeconded (as it ought to be) with all earneſtneſs of private admonition: But if the fault be ſuch, that it be not to be concealed, yet ſtill there may be place for this Charity, in extenuating and leſſening it, as far as the circumſtances will bear: As if it were done ſuddenly and raſhly, Charity will allow ſome abatement of the Cenſure, which would belong to a deſigned and deliberate Act; and ſo proportionably in other circumſtances. But the moſt frequent exerciſes of this Charity happen towards thoſe, of whoſe either innocency or guilt we have no knowledge, but are by ſome doubtful actions brought under ſuſpicion: And here we muſt remember, that it is the property of love, not to think evil, to judge the beſt; and therefore we are both to abſtain from uncharitable concluſions of them our ſelves, and as much as lies in us, to keep others from them alſo, and ſo endeavour to preſerve the credit of our Neighbour; which is oftentimes as much ſhaken by unjuſt ſuſpicions, as it would be by the trueſt accuſation. To theſe caſes, I ſuppoſe, belongs that Precept of Chriſt, *Matth.* 7. 1. *Judge not*; and when we conſider how that is backt in the following words, *That ye be not judged*, we ſhall have cauſe to believe it no ſuch light matter as the world ſeems to account it; our unmerciful judging of others will be paid home to us, in the ſtrict and ſevere Judgment of God.

The acts of Charity in ſome reſpects acts of Juſtice alſo.

13. I have now gone through this Active Charity, as it relates to the four ſeveral capacities of our Brethren, many of the particulars whereof were before briefly mentioned, when we ſpake of Juſtice. If any think it improper, that the ſame acts ſhould be made part of Juſtice and Charity too, I ſhall deſire them to conſider, that Charity being by Chriſt's Command become a debt to our Brethren, all the parts of it may in that reſpect be ranked under the head of Juſtice, ſince 'tis ſure paying of debts is a

part of that: Yet becauſe in our common uſe we do diſtinguiſh between the offices of Juſtice and Charity, I have choſe to enlarge on them in particular reference to Charity. But I deſire it may ſtill be remembred, that whatſoever is under Precept, is ſo much a due from us, that we ſin not only againſt Charity, but Juſtice too, if we neglect it; which deſerves to be conſidered, the more to ſtir up our care to the performance, and the rather, becauſe there ſeems to be a common error in this point. Men look upon their Acts of mercy, as things purely voluntary, that they have no obligation to; and the effect of it is this, that they are apt to think very highly of themſelves, when they have performed any, though never ſo mean, but never blame themſelves, though they omit all: Which is a very dangerous, but withal a very natural fruit of the former perſwaſion. If there be any Charities, wherein Juſtice is not concerned, they are thoſe which for the height and degrees of them are not made matter of ſtrict Duty, that is, are not in thoſe degrees commanded by God: And even after theſe, 'twill be very reaſonable for us to labour: But that cannot be done without taking the lower and neceſſary degrees in our way; and therefore let our firſt care be for them.

The great Rule of Charity.

14. To help us wherein there will be no better means, than to keep before our eyes that grand rule of *Loving our Neighbours as our ſelves:* This the Apoſtle makes the ſumm of our whole duty to our Neighbours, *Rom.* 13.9. Let this therefore be the ſtandard, whereby to meaſure all thy actions, which relate to others; whenever any neceſſity of thy Neighbours preſents it ſelf to thee, ask thy ſelf, whether, if thou wert in the like caſe, thy love to thy ſelf would not make thee induſtrious for relief, and then reſolve thy love to thy Neighbour muſt have the ſame effect for him. This is that Royal Law, as S. *James* calls it, *James* 2. 8. which all that profeſs themſelves ſubjects to Chriſt, muſt be ruled by; and whoſoever is ſo, will not fail of performing all Charities to others, becauſe 'tis ſure he would upon the like occaſions have all ſuch performed to himſelf. There is none but wiſhes to have his good name defended, his poverty reliev'd, his bodily ſuffering ſuccoured, only it may be ſaid, that in the Spiritual wants, there are ſome ſo careleſs of themſelves, that they wiſh no ſupply, they deſire no reproofs, no inſtructions, nay, are angry when they are given them; it may therefore ſeem that ſuch Men are not by vertue of this rule tied to thoſe ſorts of Charities. To this I anſwer, That the love of our ſelves, which is here ſet as the meaſure of that to our Neighbour, is to be underſtood to be that reaſonable Love, which Men ought to have, and therefore, though a Man fail of that due Love he owes himſelf, yet his Neighbour hath not thereby forfeited his right, he has ſtill a claim to ſuch a degree of our Love as is anſwerable to that, which in right we ſhould bear to our ſelves; and ſuch I am ſure is this care of our Spiritual Eſtate, and therefore 'tis not our deſpiſing our own Souls, that will abſolve us from Charity to other Mens: Yet I ſhall not much preſs this duty in ſuch Men, it being neither likely that they will be perſwaded to it, or do any good by it, their ill example will overwhelm all their good Exhortations, and make them unfruitful.

Peace making.

15. There is yet one Act of Charity behind, which does not properly fall under any one of the former heads, and yet may relate to them all, and that is, the making peace and amity among others: By doing whereof we may much benefit both the Souls, Bodies, Goods and Credit of our Brethren; for all theſe are in danger by ſtrife and contention. The reconciling of Enemies is a moſt bleſſed work, and brings a bleſſing on the

Actors: We have Chriſt's word for it, *Bleſſed are the Peace-makers, Matth.* 5. 9. and therefore we may be encourag'd diligently to lay hold of all opportunities of doing this office of Charity, to uſe all our Art and endeavour to take up all grudges and quarrels we diſcern among others; neither muſt we only labour to reſtore peace where it is loſt, but to preſerve it where it is: Firſt, Generally, by ſtriving to beget in the hearts of all we converſe with, a true value of that moſt precious Jewel, Peace; Secondly, Particularly, by a timely prevention of thoſe jars and unkindneſſes, we ſee likely to fall out. It may many times be in the power of a diſcreet Friend or Neighbour, to cure thoſe miſtakes and miſapprehenſions, which are the firſt beginnings of quarrels and contentions; and it will be both more eaſie and more profitable, thus to prevent, than pacifie ſtrifes. 'Tis ſure 'tis more eaſie, for when a quarrel is once broken out, 'tis like a violent flame, which cannot ſo ſoon be quencht, as it might have been, whileſt it was but a ſmothering fire. And then 'tis alſo more profitable, for it prevents many ſins, which in the progreſs of an open contention, are almoſt ſure to be committed. *Solomon* ſays, *In the multitude of words there wanteth not ſin, Prov.* 10. 19. which cannot more truly be ſaid of any ſorts of words, than thoſe that paſs in anger, and then, though the quarrel be afterwards compoſed, yet thoſe ſins will ſtill remain on their account; and therefore it is a great Charity to prevent them.

He that undertakes it, muſt be peaceable himſelf.

16. But to fit a Man for this ſo excellent an Office of Peace-making, 'tis neceſſary that he be firſt remarkably peaceable himſelf; for with what face canſt thou perſwade others to that which thou wilt not perform thy ſelf? or how canſt thou expect thy perſwaſions ſhould work? 'Twill be a ready reply in every Man's mouth, *Thou Hypocrite caſt out firſt the beam out of thine own eye, Matth.* 7. 5. and therefore be ſure thou qualifie thy ſelf for the work. There is one point of Peaceableneſs which ſeems to be little regarded among Men, and that is in the Caſe of legal treſpaſſes; Men think it nothing to go to Law about every petty trifle, and as long as they have but Law on their ſide, never think they are to blame: but ſure had we that true peaceableneſs of Spirit which we ought, we ſhould be unwilling for ſuch ſlight matters to trouble and diſquiet our Neighbours. Not that all going to Law is utterly unchriſtian, but ſuch kind of Suits eſpecially, as are upon contentiouſneſs, and ſtoutneſs of humour to defend ſuch an inconſiderable right, as the parting with will do us little or no harm, or which is yet worſe, to avenge ſuch a treſpaſs. And even in great matters, he that ſhall part with ſomewhat of his Right for love of Peace, does ſurely the moſt Chriſtianly, and moſt agreeably to the advice of the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 6. 7. *Rather to take wrong, and ſuffer our ſelves to be defrauded.* But if the damage be ſo unſupportable, that it is neceſſary for us to go to Law, yet even then we muſt take care of preſerving Peace: firſt by carrying ſtill a friendly and Chriſtian temper towards the party, not ſuffering our hearts to be at all eſtranged from him; Secondly, by being willing to yield to any reaſonable terms of agreement whenever they ſhall be offered; and truly if we carry not this temper of mind in our Suits, I ſee not how they can be reconcileable with that peaceableneſs ſo ſtrictly required of all Chriſtians. Let thoſe conſider this who make it their pleaſure themſelves to diſquiet their Neighbour, or their Trade to ſtir up others to do it. This tender regard of Peace both in our ſelves and others, is abſolutely neceſſary to be entertained of all thoſe, who own themſelves to be the Servants of him, whoſe title it is to be the *Prince of Peace, Iſa.* 9. 6.

Of going to Law.

This Charity of the actions muſt reach to Enemies.

17. All that remains to be toucht on concerning this Charity of the Actions, is the extent of it, which muſt be as large as the former of the affections, even to the taking in, not only ſtrangers, and thoſe of no relation to us, but even of our bittereſt Enemies. I have already ſpoken ſo much of the Obligation we are under to forgive them, that I ſhall not here ſay any thing of that, but that being ſuppoſed a Duty, 'twill ſure then appear no unreaſonable thing to proceed one ſtep further, by doing them good turns; for when we have once forgiven them, we can then no longer account them Enemies, and ſo 'twill be no hard matter even to fleſh and blood to do all kind things to them. And indeed this is the way, by which we muſt try the ſincerity of our forgiveneſs. 'Tis eaſie to ſay, I forgive ſuch a Man, but if when an opportunity of doing him good is offered, thou declineſt it, 'tis apparent there yet lurks the old malice in thy heart; where there is a through forgiveneſs, there will be as great a readineſs to benefit an Enemy as a Friend, nay, perhaps in ſome reſpects a greater, a true charitable perſon looking upon it as an eſpecial prize, when he has an opportunity of evidencing the truth of his Reconciliation, and obeying the Precept of his Saviour, by *doing good to them that hate him, Matth.* 5. 44. Let us therefore reſolve that all actions of kindneſs are to be performed to our Enemies; for which we have not only the command, but alſo the example of Chriſt, who had not only ſome inward relentings towards us his obſtinate and moſt provoking Enemies, but ſhewed it in acts, and thoſe no cheap, or eaſie ones, but ſuch as coſt him his deareſt blood. And ſurely we can never pretend to be either obevers of his Command, or followers of his Example, if we grudge to teſtifie our loves to our Enemies, by thoſe ſo much cheaper ways *of feeding them in hunger*, and the like; recommended to us by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 12. 20. But if we could perform theſe acts of kindneſs to Enemies in ſuch manner as might draw them from their enmity, and win them to Peace, the Charity would be doubled; And this we ſhould aim at, for that we ſee the Apoſtle ſets as the end of the forementioned acts of feeding, *&c.* that we may *heap coals of fire on their heads*, not coals to burn, but to melt them into all love and tenderneſs towards us; and this were indeed the moſt compleat way of imitating Chriſt's example, who in all he did and ſuffered for us, deſigned the reconciling of us to himſelf.

Self-love an hindrance to this Charity.

18. I have now ſhewed you the ſeveral parts of our duty to our Neighbour, towards the performance whereof I know nothing more neceſſary, than the turning out of our hearts that ſelf-love which ſo often poſſeſſes them, and that ſo wholly, that it leaves no room for Charity, nay, nor Juſtice neither to our Neighbour. By this ſelf-love I mean not that true love of our ſelves, which is the love and care of our Souls (for that would certainly help, not hinder us in this duty) but I mean that immoderate love of our own worldly intereſts and advantages, which is apparently the root of all both injuſtice and uncharitableneſs towards others. We find this ſin of ſelf-love ſet by the Apoſtle in the head of a whole troop of ſins, 2 *Tim.* 3. 2. as if it were ſome principal officer in Satan's Camp; and certainly, not without reaſon, for it never goes without an accurſed train of many other ſins, which like the Dragon's tail, *Rev.* 12. 4. ſweeps away all care of duty to others. We are by it made ſo vehement and intent upon the pleaſing our ſelves, that we have no regard to any body elſe, contrary to the direction of S. *Paul, Rom.* 15. 2. which is, not to pleaſe our ſelves, *But every man to pleaſe his Neighbour for his good to edification*; which he backs with the example of Chriſt, *Ver.* 3. *For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf:* If therefore we have any ſincere deſire to have this vertue of Charity rooted in our hearts, we

muſt be careful to weed out this ſin of ſelf-love, for 'tis impoſſible they can proſper together.

Prayer a means to procure it.

19. But when we have removed this hinderance, we muſt remember that this, as all other Graces, proceeds not from our ſelves, it is the gift of God, and therefore we muſt earneſtly pray to him to work it in us, to ſend his Holy Spirit, which once appeared in the form of a *Dove*, a meek and gall-leſs Creature, to frame our hearts to the ſame temper, and enable us rightly to perform this duty.

Chriſtian duties both poſſible and pleaſant.

20. I Have now paſt through thoſe ſeveral Branches I at firſt propoſed, and ſhewed you what is our Duty to God, our Selves, and our Neighbour: Of which I may ſay as it is, *Luk.* 10. 28. *This do and thou ſhalt live.* And ſurely 'tis no impoſſible task to perform this in ſuch a meaſure, as God will graciouſly accept, that is, in Sincerity, though not in Perfection, for God is not that auſtere Maſter, *Luke* 19.20. *That reaps where he has not ſown*, he requires nothing of us, which he is not ready by his Grace to enable us to perform, if we be not wanting to our ſelves, either in asking it by Prayer, or in uſing it by Diligence. And as it is not impoſſible, ſo neither is it ſuch a ſad melancholy task, as men are apt to think it. 'Tis a ſpecial policy of Satan's, to do as the Spies did, *Numb.* 23. 28. *Bring up an ill report upon this good Land*, this ſtate of Chriſtian Life, thereby to diſcourage us from entering into it, to fright us with I know not what Gyants we ſhall meet with; but let us not thus be cheated, let us but take the courage to try, and we ſhall indeed find it a *Canaan, a Land flowing with milk and honey:* God is not in this reſpect to his people *a wilderneſs, a Land of Darkneſs, Jer.* 2. 31. His Service does not bereave Men of any true Joy, but helps them to a great deal: Chriſt's yoke is an eaſie, nay, a pleaſant yoke, his burden a light, yea, a gracious burden. There is in the practice of Chriſtian Duties a great deal of preſent pleaſure, and if we feel it not, it is becauſe of the reſiſtance our vicious and ſinful cuſtoms make, which by the contention raiſes an uneaſineſs. But then firſt, that is to be charged only on our ſelves, for having got thoſe ill cuſtoms, and thereby made that hard to us, which in it ſelf is moſt pleaſant, the duties are not to be accuſed for it. And then ſecondly, even there the pleaſure of ſubduing thoſe ill habits, overcoming thoſe corrupt cuſtoms is ſuch, as hugely outweigheth all the trouble of the combate.

Even when they expoſe us to outward ſufferings.

21. But it will perhaps be ſaid, that ſome parts of Piety are of ſuch a nature, as will be very apt to expoſe us to perſecutions and ſufferings in the World, and that thoſe are not joyous but grievous.

I anſwer, That even in theſe there is matter of joy. We ſee the Apoſtles thought it ſo, *They rejoyced that they were counted worthy to ſuffer for Chriſt's name*, Acts 4. 41. and S. *Peter* tells us, *That if any ſuffer as a Chriſtian, he is to glorifie God for it*, 1 *Pet.* 4. 16. There is ſuch a force and vertue in the teſtimony of a good Conſcience, as is able to change the greateſt ſuffering into the greateſt triumph, and that teſtimony we can never have more clear and lively, than when we ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake; ſo that you ſee Chriſtianity is very amiable even in its ſaddeſt dreſs, the inward comforts of it do far ſurpaſs all the outward tribulations that attend it, and that even in the inſtant while we are in the ſtate of warfare upon Earth. But then if we look forward to the Crown of our Victories, thoſe Eternal Rewards in Heaven, we can never think thoſe tasks ſad, though we had nothing at preſent to ſweeten them, that have ſuch recompences await them at the end; were our labours never ſo heavy, we could have no cauſe to faint under them. Let us therefore whenever we meet with any diſcouragements in our courſe, fix our eye on this rich prize, and then *run with patience, the race which is ſet before us, Heb.* 12. 2. follow the Captain of our ſalvation through the greateſt ſufferings, yea, even through the ſame red Sea of Blood which he hath waded, whenever our Obedience to him ſhall require it; for though our fidelity to him ſhould bring us to death it ſelf, we are ſure to be no loſers by it; for to ſuch he hath promiſed a Crown of Life, the very expectation whereof is able to keep a Chriſtian more chearful in his Fetters and Dungeon, than a worldling can be in the midſt of his greateſt proſperities.

The danger of delaying our turning to God.

22. All that remains for me farther to add, is earneſtly to intreat and beſeech the Reader, that without delay he put himſelf into this ſo pleaſant and gainful a courſe, by ſetting ſincerely to the practice of all thoſe things, which either by this Book, or by any other means he diſcerns to be his Duty: and the further he hath formerly gone out of his way, the more haſt it concerns him to make to get into it, and to uſe the more diligence in walking in it. He that hath a long Journey to go, and finds he hath loſt a great part of his day in a wrong way, will not need much intreaty, either to turn into the right, or to quicken his pace in it. And this is the caſe of all thoſe that have lived in any courſe of ſin, they are in a wrong road, which will never bring them to the place they aim at: nay, which will certainly bring them to the place they moſt fear and abhor; much of their day is ſpent, how much will be left to finiſh their Journey in, none knows, perhaps the next hour, the next minute, the night of death may overtake them; what a madneſs is it then for them to defer one moment to turn out of that Path which leads to certain deſtruction, and to put themſelves in that, which will bring them to Bliſs and Glory? Yet ſo are Men bewitched, and enchanted with the deceitfulneſs of ſin, that no intreaty, no perſwaſion can prevail with them, to make this ſo reaſonable, ſo neceſſary a change: not but that they acknowledge it needful to be done, but they are unwilling to do it yet; they would enjoy all the pleaſures of ſin as long as they live, and then they hope at their death, or ſome little time before it, to do all the buſineſs of their Souls. But, alas! Heaven is too high to be thus jumpt into, the way to it is a long and leiſurely aſcent, which requires time to walk. The hazards of ſuch deferring are more largely ſpoken of in the Diſcourſe of Repentance: I ſhall not here repeat them, but deſire the Reader ſeriouſly to lay them to heart, and then ſurely he will think it ſeaſonable Counſel that is given by the Wiſe Man, *Ecclus.* 5. 7. *Make no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from day to day.*

FINIS.

PRIVATE
DEVOTIONS
FOR SEVERAL
OCCASIONS,
ORDINARY
AND
EXTRAORDINARY.

Chriſtian Reader,

I *Have, for the help of thy Devotions, ſet down ſome* FORMS *of* PRIVATE PRAYER, *upon* ſeveral occaſions: *If it be thought an omiſſion that there are none for Families, I muſt anſwer for my ſelf, that it was not from any opinion, that God is not as well to be worſhipp'd in the Family as the Cloſet; but becauſe the Providence of God and the Church hath already furniſhed thee for that purpoſe, infinitely beyond what my utmoſt care could do. I mean the* PUBLICK LITURGY *or* COMMON-PRAYER, *which for all publick Addreſſes to God (and ſuch are Family-Prayers) are ſo excellent and uſeful, that we may ſay of it, as* David *did of* Goliah's *Sword,* 1 *Sam.* 21. 9 There is none like it.

DIRECTIONS *for the* MORNING.

As ſoon as ever thou awakeſt in the morning, lift up thy heart to God in this or the like ſhort Prayer.

LORD, as thou haſt awaked my Body from ſleep, ſo by thy Grace awaken my Soul from ſin; and make me ſo to walk before thee this day, and all the reſt of my Life, that when the laſt Trumpet ſhall awake me out of my Grave, I may riſe to Life Immortal, through Jeſus Chriſt.

W*Hen thou haſt thus begun, ſuffer not (without ſome urgent neceſſity) any worldly thoughts to fill thy mind, till thou haſt alſo paid thy more ſolemn Devotions to Almighty God, and therefore during the time thou art dreſſing thy ſelf, (which ſhould be no longer than common decency requires) exerciſe thy mind in ſome ſpiritual thoughts: As for example, conſider to what* Temptations *thy* Buſineſs *or* Company *that day are moſt like to lay thee open, and arm thy ſelf with reſolutions againſt them; or again, conſider what* occaſions of doing ſervice to God, *or good to thy Neighbour are that day moſt likely to preſent themſelves, and reſolve to embrace them; and alſo contrive how thou mayeſt improve them to the uttermoſt. But eſpecially it will be fit for thee to examine whether there have any ſin eſcaped thee ſince thy laſt nights examination. If after theſe conſiderations any further leiſure remain, thou mayeſt profitably employ it in meditating on the general* Reſurrection *(whereof our riſing from our beds is a repreſentation) and of that dreadful* Judgment *which ſhall follow it, and then think* *with thy ſelf in what preparation thou art for it, and reſolve to husband carefully every minute of thy time towards the fitting thee for that great account. As ſoon as thou art ready, retire to ſome private place, and there offer up to God thy morning Sacrifice of Praiſe and Prayer.*

PRAYERS for the MORNING.

At thy firſt kneeling down, ſay,

O Holy, bleſſed and glorious Trinity, three Perſons and one God, have mercy upon me a miſerable ſinner.

LORD, I know not what to pray for as I ought, O let thy Spirit help my infirmities, and enable me to offer up a ſpiritual Sacrifice accep-to Thee by Jeſus Chriſt.

A Thanksgiving.

O Gracious Lord, whoſe Mercies endure for ever, I thy unworthy ſervant who have ſo deeply taſted of them, deſire to render thee the tribute of my humbleſt praiſes for them. In thee, O Lord, I live and move and have my being: Thou firſt madeſt me to be, and then that I might not be miſerable but happy, thou ſenteſt thy Son out of thy boſom to Redeem me from the power of my ſins by his Grace, and from the puniſhment of them by his Blood, and by both to bring me to his Glory. Thou haſt by thy mercy cauſed me to be born within thy peculiar fold, the Chriſtian Church, where I was early conſecrated to thee in Baptiſm, and have been partaker of all thoſe Spiritual helps which might aid me to perform that Vow I there made to thee; and when by my own wilfulneſs or negligence, I have failed to do it, yet thou in thy manifold mercies haſt not forſaken me, but haſt graciouſly invited me to repentance, afforded me all means both outward and inward for it, and with much patience haſt attended and not cut me off in the acts of thoſe many damning ſins I have committed, as I have moſt juſtly deſerved. It is, O Lord, thy Reſtraining grace alone by which I have been kept back from any the greateſt ſins, and it is thy Inciting and Aſſiſting grace alone, by which I have been enabled to do any the leaſt good; therefore not unto me, not unto me, but unto thy name be the praiſes. For theſe and all other thy Spiritual Bleſſings, my Soul doth magnifie the Lord, and all that is within me praiſe his Holy Name. I likewiſe praiſe thee for thoſe many outward Bleſſings I enjoy, as health, friends, food and raiment, the comforts as well as the neceſſaries of this Life; for thoſe continual Protections of thy hand, by which I and mine are kept from dangers, and thoſe gracious Deliverances thou haſt often afforded out of ſuch as have befallen me, and for that mercy of thine whereby thou haſt ſweetned and allayed thoſe troubles thou haſt not ſeen fit wholly to remove: For thy particular preſervation of me this night, and all other thy goodneſs towards me. Lord, grant that I may render thee not only the fruit of my lips, but the obedience of my life; that ſo theſe bleſſings here may be an earneſt of thoſe richer bleſſings thou haſt prepared for thoſe that love thee, and that for his ſake, whom thou haſt made the Author of Eternal Salvation to all that obey him, even Jeſus Chriſt.

A Confeſſion.

O Righteous Lord, who hateſt iniquity, I thy ſinful Creature caſt my ſelf at thy feet, acknowledging that I moſt juſtly deſerve to be utterly abhorred and forſaken by thee; for I have drunk iniquity like water, gone on in a continued courſe of ſin and rebellion againſt thee, daily committing thoſe things thou forbiddeſt, and leaving undone thoſe things thou commandeſt; mine heart, which ſhould be an habitation for thy Spirit, is become a cage of unclean Birds, of foul and diſordered affections; and out of this abundance of the heart, my mouth ſpeaketh, my hands act, ſo that in thought, word and deed, I continually tranſgreſs againſt thee. [*Here mention the greateſt of thy ſins.*] Nay, O Lord, I have deſpiſed that goodneſs of thine which ſhould lead me to Repentance, hardning my heart againſt all thoſe means thou haſt uſed for my amendment. And now, Lord, what can I expect from thee but judgment and fiery indignation, that is indeed the due reward of my ſins? But, O Lord, there is mercy with thee that thou mayeſt be feared. O fit me for that mercy by giving me a deep and hearty Repentance, and then according to thy Goodneſs let thine anger and thy wrath be turned away from me; look upon me in thy Son, my bleſſed Saviour, and for the merit of his ſufferings pardon all my ſins: And, Lord, I beſeech thee, by the power of thy Grace ſo to renew and purifie my heart, that I may become a new Creature, utterly forſaking every evil way, and living in conſtant, ſincere, univerſal obedience to thee all the reſt of my days, that behaving my ſelf as a good and faithful Servant, I may by thy mercy at the laſt be received into the joy of my Lord. Grant this for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake.

A Prayer for Grace.

O Moſt gracious God, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh, I wretched Creature that am not able of my ſelf ſo much as to think a good thought, beſeech thee to work in me both to Will and Do according to thy good pleaſure. Inlighten my mind that I may know thee, and let me not be barren or unfruitful in that knowledge; Lord work in my heart a true Faith, a purifying Hope, and an unfeigned Love towards thee; give me a full Truſt on thee, Zeal for thee, Reverence of all things that relate to thee; make me fearful to offend thee, Thankful for thy mercies, Humble under thy Corrections, Devout in thy Service, Sorrowful for my ſins; and grant that in all things I may behave my ſelf ſo, as befits a Creature to his Creator, a Servant to his Lord; enable me likewiſe to perform that duty I owe to my ſelf; give me that Meekneſs, Humility and Contentedneſs whereby I may always poſſeſs my Soul in Patience and Thankfulneſs; make me diligent in all my duties, watchful againſt all temptations, perfectly pure and temperate, and ſo moderate in my moſt lawful enjoyments, that they may never become a ſnare to me; make me alſo, O Lord, to be ſo affected towards my Neighbour, that I never tranſgreſs that royal Law of thine, of loving him as my ſelf; grant me exactly to perform all parts of Juſtice, yielding to all whatſoever by any kind of Right becomes their due, and give me ſuch bowels of mercy and compaſſion, that I may never fail to do all acts of Charity to all men, whether friends or enemies, according to thy command and example. Finally I beſeech thee, O Lord, to ſanctifie me throughout, that my whole Spirit and Soul and Body may be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghoſt be all honour and glory for ever, *Amen.*

Interceſſion.

Interceſſion.

O Bleſſed Lord, whoſe mercy is over all thy works, I beſeech thee to have mercy upon all Men, and grant that the precious ranſom which was paid by thy Son for all, may be effectual to the ſaving of all. Give thy inlightning Grace to thoſe that are in darkneſs, and thy converting Grace to thoſe that are in ſin; look with thy tendereſt compaſſions upon the Univerſal Church. O be favourable and gracious unto *Sion,* build thou the walls of *Jeruſalem:* Unite all thoſe that profeſs thy Name, to thee, by purity, and holineſs; and to each other by brotherly love. Have mercy on this deſolate Church, and ſinful Nation; thou haſt moved the Land and divided it, heal the ſores thereof, for it ſhaketh; make us ſo truly to repent of thoſe ſins which have provoked thy Judgments, that thou alſo mayeſt turn and repent, and leave a bleſſing behind thee. Bleſs thoſe whom thou haſt appointed our Governours, whether in Church or State: So rule their hearts, and ſtrengthen their hands, that they may neither want will nor power to puniſh wickedneſs and vice, and to maintain God's true Religion and Vertue. Have pity, O Lord, on all that are in affliction; be a Father to the Fatherleſs, and plead the cauſe of the Widow, comfort the feeble-minded, ſupport the weak, heal the ſick, relieve the needy, defend the oppreſſed, and adminiſter to every one according to their ſeveral neceſſities; let thy bleſſings reſt upon all that are near and dear to me, and grant them whatſoever thou ſeeſt neceſſary either to their Bodies or their Souls. [*Here name thy neareſt Relations.*] Reward all thoſe that have done me good, and pardon all thoſe that have done or wiſht me evil, and work in them and me all that good which may make us acceptable in thy ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt.

For Preſervation.

O Merciful God, by whoſe bounty alone it is, that I have this day added to my life, I beſeech thee ſo to guide me in it by thy Grace, that I may do nothing which may diſhonour thee, or wound my own Soul, but that I may diligently apply my ſelf to do all ſuch good works, as thou haſt prepared for me to walk in; and, Lord, I beſeech thee, give thy Angels charge over me, to keep me in all my ways, that no evil happen unto me, nor any plague come nigh my dwelling, but that I and mine may be ſafe under thy gracious protection, thtough Jeſus Chriſt.

O Lord, pardon the wandrings and coldneſs of theſe petitions, and deal with me, not according either to my prayers or deſerts, but according to my needs and thine own rich mercies in Jeſus Chriſt, in whoſe bleſſed name and words, I conclude theſe my imperfect prayers; ſaying, *Our Father which art in Heaven,* &c.

DIRECTIONS for NIGHT.

AT NIGHT, when it draws towards the time of reſt, bethink thy ſelf how thou haſt paſſed the day; examine thine own heart, what ſin either of thought, word, or deed thou haſt committed, what opportunity of doing good thou haſt omitted, and whatſoever thou findeſt to accuſe thy ſelf of, confeſs humbly and penitently to God, renew thy purpoſes and reſolutions of amendment, and beg his pardon in Chriſt, and this not ſlightly, and only as of courſe, but with all devout earneſtneſs and heartineſs, as thou wouldeſt do, if thou wert ſure thy death were as near approaching as thy ſleep, which for ought thou knoweſt may be ſo indeed, and *therefore thou ſhouldeſt no more venture to ſleep unreconciled to God, than thou wouldeſt dare to die ſo. In the next place conſider what ſpecial and extraordinary mercies thou haſt that day received, as if thou haſt had any great deliverance, either in thy inward man, from ſome dangerous temptations, or in thy outward, from any great and apparent danger, and offer to God thy hearty and devout praiſe for the ſame; or if nothing extraordinary have ſo hapned, and thou haſt been kept even from the approach of danger, thou haſt not the leſs, but the greater cauſe to magnifie God, who hath by his protection ſo guarded thee, that not ſo much as the fear of evil hath aſſaulted thee. And therefore omit not to pay him the tribute of humble thankfulneſs, as well for his uſual and daily preſervations, as his more extraordinary deliverances. And above all endeavour ſtill by the conſideration of his mercies to have thy heart the more cloſely knit to him, remembring that every favour received from him is a new engagement upon thee to love and obey him.*

PRAYERS for NIGHT.

O Holy bleſſed and glorious Trinity, three Perſons and one God, have mercy upon me a miſerable ſinner.

Lord, I now not what to pray for as I ought, O let thy Spirit help my infirmities, and enable me to offer up a ſpiritual Sacrifice acceptable unto thee by *Jeſus* Chriſt.

A Confeſſion.

O MOST Holy Lord God, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, how ſhall I, abominable wretch, dare to appear before Thee, who am nothing but pollution? I am defiled in my very nature, having a backwardneſs to all good, and a readineſs to all evil; but I have defiled my ſelf yet much worſe by my own actual ſins and wicked cuſtoms: I have tranſgreſt my duty to Thee, my Neighbour, and my ſelf and that both in Thought, in Word, and in Deed, by doing thoſe things which thou haſt expreſly forbidden, and by neglecting to do thoſe things thou haſt commanded me. And this not only through ignorance and frailty, but knowingly and wilfully, againſt the motions of thy Spirit, and the checks of my own Conſcience to the contrary. And to make all theſe out of meaſure ſinful, I have gone on in a daily courſe of repeating theſe provocations againſt thee, notwithſtanding all thy Calls to, and my own purpoſes and Vows of amendment; yea, this very day I have not ceaſed to add new ſins to all my former guilts. [*Here name the particulars.*] And now, O Lord, what ſhall I ſay, or how ſhall I open my mouth, ſeeing I have done theſe things? I know that the wages of theſe ſins is death; but O thou who willeſt not the death of a ſinner, have mercy upon me; work in me I beſeech thee, a ſincere contrition, and a perfect hatred of my ſins: And let me not daily confeſs, and yet as daily renew them: But grant, O Lord, that from this inſtant I may give a Bill of Divorce to all my moſt beloved luſts, and then be thou pleaſed to marry me to thy ſelf in truth, in righteouſneſs and holineſs. And for all my paſt ſins, O Lord, receive a reconciliation; accept of that ranſon thy bleſſed Son hath paid for me, and for his ſake whom thou haſt ſet forth as a propitiation, pardon all my offences, and receive me to thy favour. And when thou haſt thus ſpoken peace to my Soul, Lord, keep me that I turn not any more to folly, but ſo eſtabliſh me with thy Grace, that no temptation of the World, the Devil, or my own fleſh may ever draw me to offend thee, that being made free from ſin, and becoming

coming a ſervant unto God, I may have my fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

A Thankſgiving.

O Thou Father of Mercies who art kind even to the unthankful, I acknowledge my ſelf to have abundantly experimented that gracious property of thine; for notwithſtanding my daily provocations againſt thee, thou ſtill heapeſt mercy and loving kindneſs upon me. All my contempts and deſpiſings of thy ſpiritual favours have not yet made thee withdraw them, but in the riches of thy goodneſs and long-ſuffering thou ſtill continueſt to me the offers of Grace and Life in thy Son. And all my abuſes of thy temporal bleſſings thou haſt not puniſhed with an utter deprivation of them, but art ſtill pleaſed to afford me a liberal portion of them. The ſins of this day thou haſt not repayed, as juſtly thou might'ſt, by ſweeping me away with a ſwift deſtruction, but haſt ſpared and preſerved me according to the greatneſs of thy mercy. [*Here mention the particular mercies of that day.*] What ſhall I render unto the Lord, for all theſe benefits he hath done unto me? Lord, let this goodneſs of thine lead me to repentance, and grant that I may not only offer thee thanks and praiſe, but may alſo order my converſation aright, that ſo I may at the laſt ſee, the ſalvation of God, through *Jeſus* Chriſt.

Here uſe the Prayer for Grace, and that of Interceſſion appointed for the Morning.

For Preſervation.

O Bleſſed Lord, the Keeper of *Iſrael*, that neither ſlumbereſt nor ſleepeſt, be pleaſed in thy mercy to watch over me this night; keep me by thy grace from all works of darkneſs, and defend me by thy power from all dangers, grant me moderate and refreſhing ſleep, ſuch as may fit me for the duties of the day following. And, Lord, make me ever mindful of that time when I ſhall lie down in the duſt; and becauſe I know neither the day nor the hour of my Maſter's coming, grant me grace that I may be always ready, that I may never live in ſuch a ſtate as I ſhall fear to die in; but that whether I live, I may live unto the Lord, or whether I die, I may die unto the Lord, ſo that living and dying I may be thine, through *Jeſus* Chriſt.

Uſe the ſame concluding Prayer as in the Morning.

AS thou art putting off thy clothes, think with thy ſelf that the time approaches that thou muſt put off thy body alſo, and then thy Soul muſt appear naked before God's Judgment Seat; *and therefore thou hadſt need be careful to make it ſo clean and pure by repentance and holineſs, that he who will not look on iniquity may graciouſly behold and accept it.*

Let thy Bed put thee in mind of thy Grave, and when thou lieſt down, ſay,

O Bleſſed Saviour, who by thy precious death and burial didſt take away the ſting of Death, and the power of the Grave, grant me the joyful fruits of that thy victory, and be thou to me in life and death advantage.

I will lay me down in peace, and take my reſt; for it is thou, Lord, only that makeſt me dwell in ſafety.

Into thy hands I commend my Spirit; for thou haſt redeemed it, O Lord, thou God of truth.

In the ANCIENT CHURCH *there were beſides Morning and Night, four other times every day, which were called* HOURS OF PRAYER, *and the zeal of thoſe firſt Chriſtians was ſuch, as made them conſtantly obſerved. It would be thought too great a ſtrictneſs now in this lukewarm Age to enjoyn the like frequency: Yet I cannot but mention the example, and ſay, that for thoſe who are not by very neceſſary buſineſs prevented, it will be but reaſonable to imitate it, and make up in publick and private thoſe* FOUR TIMES *of* PRAYER, *beſides the* OFFICES *already ſet down for* MORNING *and* NIGHT, *and that none may be to ſeek how to exerciſe their devotions at theſe times, I have added divers* COLLECTS *for ſeveral Graces, whereof every man may uſe at each ſuch time of prayer ſo many as his zeal and leiſure ſhall point out to him, adding if he pleaſe, one of the Confeſſions appointed for Morning and Night, and never omitting the* LORD'S PRAYER.

But if any Man's ſtate of life be really ſo buſie, as will not allow him time for ſo long and ſolemn devotions; yet certainly there is no Man ſo overlaid with buſineſs, but that he may find leiſure oftentimes in a day to ſay the LORD'S PRAYER *alone: And therefore let him uſe that, if he cannot more. But becauſe it is the Character of a Chriſtian,* Phil. 3.20. That he hath his converſation in Heaven, *it is very fit that beſides theſe ſet times of Prayer, he ſhould divers times in a day by ſhort and ſudden* EJACULATIONS *dart up his Soul thither. And for this ſort of devotion no man can want leiſure, for it may be performed in the midſt of buſineſs; the Artificer at his work, the Husbandman at his Plow may practiſe it. Now as he cannot want time, ſo that he may not want matter for it, I have thought it not unuſeful out of that rich ſtorehouſe, the* BOOK *of* PSALMS, *to furniſh him with ſome Texts which may very fitly be uſed for this purpoſe; which being learned by heart, will always be ready at hand to employ his devotion; and the matter of them being various, ſome for pardon of ſin, ſome for Grace, ſome for the light of God's countenance, ſome for the Church, ſome for Thankſgiving,* &c. *every Man may fit himſelf according to the preſent need and temper of his Soul. I have given theſe not as a full collection, but only a taſte, by which the Reader's appetite may be raiſed to ſearch after more in that Book, and other parts of Holy Scripture.*

COLLECTS for ſeveral GRACES.

For Faith.

O Bleſſed Lord, whom without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe, let thy Spirit, I beſeech thee, work in me ſuch a Faith, as may be acceptable in thy ſight, even ſuch as worketh by Love. O let me not reſt in a dead ineffectual Faith, but grant that it may be ſuch as may ſhew it ſelf by my works, that it may be that victorious Faith which may enable me to overcome the world, and conform me to the Image of that Chriſt, on whom I believe; that ſo at the laſt I may receive the end of my Faith, even the Salvation of my Soul, by the ſame Jeſus Chriſt.

For Hope.

O Lord, who art the hope of all the ends of the Earth, let me never be deſtitute of a well grounded hope, nor yet poſſeſt with a vain preſumption, ſuffer me not to think thou wilt either be reconciled to my ſins, or reject my repentance: But give me, I beſeech thee, ſuch a hope as may be anſwerable to the only ground of hope, thy promiſes, and ſuch as may both encourage and enable me to purifie my ſelf from all filthineſs both of fleſh and ſpirit, that ſo it may indeed become to me an anchor of the Soul both ſure and ſtedfaſt, entring even within the veil; whither the forerunner is for me entred, even Jeſus Chriſt my High Prieſt and bleſſed Redeemer.

For the Love of God.

O Holy and gracious Lord, who art infinitely excellent in thy ſelf, and infinitely bountiful and compaſſionate towards me, I beſeech thee ſuffer not my heart to be ſo hardned through the deceitfulneſs of ſin, as to reſiſt ſuch charms of Love, but let them make deep and laſting impreſſions on my Soul. Lord, Thou art pleaſed to require my heart, and thou only haſt right to it. O let me not be ſo ſacrilegiouſly unjuſt as to alienate any part of it, but enable me to render it up whole and entire to thee. But, O my God, thou ſeeſt it is already uſurped, the World with its vanities hath ſeized it, and like a ſtrong Man armed keeps poſſeſſion. O thou who art ſtronger come upon him, and take this unworthy heart of mine as thine own ſpoil, refine it with that purifying fire of thy love, that it may be a fit habitation for thy Spirit. Lord, if thou ſee it fit, be pleaſed to let me taſte of thoſe joys, thoſe raviſhments of thy Love, wherewith thy Saints have been ſo tranſported. But if in this I know not what I ask, If I may not chuſe my place in thy Kingdom, yet, O Lord, deny me not to drink of thy cup, let me have ſuch a ſincerity and degree of Love, as may make me endure any thing for thy ſake, ſuch a perfect Love as may caſt out all fear and ſloth too, that nothing may ſeem to me too grievous to ſuffer, or too difficult to do in obedience to Thee; that ſo expreſſing my love by keeping thy Commandments, I may by thy mercy at laſt obtain that Crown of Life, which thou haſt promiſed to thoſe that love thee, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

For Sincerity.

O Holy Lord, who requireſt truth in the inward parts, I humbly beſeech thee to purge me from all hypocriſie and unſincerity. The heart, O Lord, is deceitful above all things, and my heart is deceitful above all hearts: O thou who ſearcheſt the heart and reins, try me, and ſeek the ground of my heart, and ſuffer not any accurſed thing to lurk within me, but purifie me even with fire, ſo thou conſume my droſs. O Lord, I cannot deceive thee, but I may moſt eaſily deceive my ſelf. I beſeech thee let me not reſt in any ſuch deceit; but bring me to a ſight and hatred of my moſt hidden corruptions, that I may not cheriſh any darling luſt, but make an utter deſtruction of every *Amalekite*. O ſuffer me not to ſpeak peace to my ſelf, when there is no peace, but grant I may judge of my ſelf as thou judgeſt of me, that I may never be at peace with my ſelf, till I am at perfect peace with thee, and by purity of heart be qualified to ſee thee in thy Kingdom, through Jeſus Chriſt.

For Devotion in Prayer.

O Gracious Lord God, who not only permitteſt, but inviteſt us miſerable and needy Creatures, to preſent our petitions to thee, grant I beſeech thee, that the frequency of my prayer may be ſomewhat proportionable to thoſe continual needs I have of thy mercy. Lord I confeſs, it is the greateſt honour and greateſt advantage, thus to be allowed acceſs to thee; yet ſo ſottiſh and ſtupid is my profane heart, that it ſhuns or fruſtrates the opportunities of it. My Soul, O Lord, is poſſeſt with a ſpirit of infirmity, it is bowed together, and can in no wiſe lift up it ſelf to thee. O be thou pleaſed to cure this ſad, this miſerable diſeaſe, to enſpirit and enliven this earthly droſſy heart, that it may freely mount towards thee; that I may ſet a true value on this moſt valuable privilege, and take delight in approaching to thee: And that my approaches may be with a reverence ſome way anſwerable to that awful Majeſty I come before; with an importunity and earneſtneſs anſwerable to thoſe preſſing wants I have to be ſupplied; and with ſuch a fixedneſs and attention of mind, as no wandring thoughts may interrupt: That I may no more incur the guilt of drawing near to thee with my lips, when my heart is far from thee, or have my prayers turned into ſin; but may ſo ask that I may receive, ſeek that I may find, knock that it may be opened unto me; that from praying to thee here, I may be tranſlated to the praiſing thee eternally in thy glory, through the Merits and Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt.

For Humility.

O Thou High and Lofty One, that inhabiteſt Eternity, yet art pleaſed to dwell with the humble Spirit, pour into my heart, I beſeech thee, that excellent grace of Humility, which may utterly work out all thoſe vain conceits I have of my ſelf; Lord, convince me powerfully of my own wretchedneſs, make me to ſee that I am miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and not only duſt, but ſin; that ſo in all thy diſpenſations towards me, I may lay my hand upon my mouth, and heartily acknowledge that I am leſs than the leaſt of thy mercies, and greater than the greateſt of thy judgments. And, O Lord, grant me not only to walk humbly with my God, but even with Men alſo, that I may not only ſubmit my ſelf to thy rebukes, but even to thoſe of my fellow Chriſtians, and with meekneſs receive and obey their admonitions. And make me ſo to behave my ſelf towards all, that I never do any thing through ſtrife and vain-glory; and to that end grant, that in lowlineſs of mind I may eſteem every other Man better than my ſelf, and be willing that others ſhould eſteem them ſo alſo: That I never nouriſh any high opinion of my ſelf, nor covet one among others, but that deſpiſing the vain praiſe of Men, I may ſeek that praiſe which cometh from thee only. That ſo inſtead of thoſe mean ſervile Arts I have uſed to recommend me to the eſteem of Men, I may now imploy all my induſtry and care to approve my ſelf to thee, who reſiſteth the proud, and giveſt grace to the humble: Grant this, O Lord, for his ſake, who humbled himſelf unto the Death of the Croſs, Jeſus Chriſt.

For the Fear of God.

O Glorious Majeſty, who only art high and to be feared, poſſeſs my Soul with a holy awe and reverence of thee, that I may give thee the honour due unto thy Name, and may bear ſuch a reſpect to all things which relate to thee, that I may never profane any holy thing, or ſacrilegiouſly invade what thou haſt ſet apart to thy ſelf. And, O Lord, ſince thou art a God that wilt not clear the guilty, let the dread of thy juſtice make me tremble to provoke thee in any thing. O let me not ſo miſplace my fear, as to be afraid of a Man that ſhall die, and of the ſon of Man, who ſhall be made as graſs, and forget the Lord my Maker; but repleniſh my Soul with that fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of Wiſdom, which may be as a bridle to all my brutiſh appetites, and keep me in a conſtant conformity to thy holy Will. Hear me, O Lord, I beſeech thee, and put this fear in my heart, that I may not depart from thee, but may with fear and trembling work out my own ſalvation, through Jeſus Chriſt.

both encourage and enable me to purifie my ſelf from all filthineſs both of fleſh and ſpirit, that ſo it may indeed become to me an anchor of the Soul both ſure and ſtedfaſt, entring even within the veil; whither the forerunner is for me entred, even Jeſus Chriſt my High Prieſt and bleſſed Redeemer.

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O Holy Lord, who requireſt truth in the inward parts, I humbly beſeech thee to purge me from all hypocriſie and unſincerity. The heart, O Lord, is deceitful above all things, and my heart is deceitful above all hearts: O thou who ſearcheſt the heart and reins, try me, and ſeek the ground of my heart, and ſuffer not any accurſed thing to lurk within me, but purifie me even with fire, ſo thou conſume my droſs. O Lord, I cannot deceive thee, but I may moſt eaſily deceive my ſelf. I beſeech thee let me not reſt in any ſuch deceit; but bring me to a ſight and hatred of my moſt hidden corruptions, that I may not cheriſh any darling luſt, but make an utter deſtruction of every *Amalekite*. O ſuffer me not to ſpeak peace to my ſelf, when there is no peace, but grant I may judge of my ſelf as thou judgeſt of me, that I may never be at peace with my ſelf, till I am at perfect peace with thee, and by purity of heart be qualified to ſee thee in thy Kingdom, through Jeſus Chriſt.

For Devotion in Prayer.

O Gracious Lord God, who not only permitteſt, but inviteſt us miſerable and needy Creatures, to preſent our petitions to thee, grant I beſeech thee, that the frequency of my prayer may be ſomewhat proportionable to thoſe continual needs I have of thy mercy. Lord I confeſs, it is the greateſt honour and greateſt advantage, thus to be allowed acceſs to thee; yet ſo ſottiſh and ſtupid is my profane heart, that it ſhuns or fruſtrates the opportunities of it. My Soul, O Lord, is poſſeſt with a ſpirit of infirmity, it is bowed together, and can in no wiſe lift up it ſelf to thee. O be thou pleaſed to cure this ſad, this miſerable diſeaſe, to enſpirit and enliven this earthly droſſy heart, that it may freely mount towards thee; that I may ſet a true value on this moſt valuable privilege, and take delight in approaching to thee: And that my approaches may be with a reverence ſome way anſwerable to that awful Majeſty I come before; with an importunity and earneſtneſs anſwerable to thoſe preſſing wants I have to be ſupplied; and with ſuch a fixedneſs and attention of mind, as no wandring thoughts may interrupt: That I may no more incur the guilt of drawing near to thee with my lips, when my heart is far from thee, or have my prayers turned into ſin; but may ſo ask that I may receive, ſeek that I may find, knock that it may be opened unto me; that from praying to thee here, I may be tranſlated to the praiſing thee eternally in thy glory, through the Merits and Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt.

For Humility.

O Thou High and Lofty One, that inhabiteſt Eternity, yet art pleaſed to dwell with the humble Spirit, pour into my heart, I beſeech thee, that excellent grace of Humility, which may utterly work out all thoſe vain conceits I have of my ſelf; Lord, convince me powerfully of my own wretchedneſs, make me to ſee that I am miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and not only duſt, but ſin; that ſo in all thy diſpenſations towards me, I may lay my hand upon my mouth, and heartily acknowledge that I am leſs than the leaſt of thy mercies, and greater than the greateſt of thy judgments. And, O Lord, grant me not only to walk humbly with my God, but even with Men alſo, that I may not only ſubmit my ſelf to thy rebukes, but even to thoſe of my fellow Chriſtians, and with meekneſs receive and obey their admonitions. And make me ſo to behave my ſelf towards all, that I never do any thing through ſtrife and vain-glory; and to that end grant, that in lowlineſs of mind I may eſteem every other Man better than my ſelf, and be willing that others ſhould eſteem them ſo alſo: That I never nouriſh any high opinion of my ſelf, nor covet one among others, but that deſpiſing the vain praiſe of Men, I may ſeek that praiſe which cometh from thee only. That ſo inſtead of thoſe mean ſervile Arts I have uſed to recommend me to the eſteem of Men, I may now imploy all my induſtry and care to approve my ſelf to thee, who reſiſteth the proud, and giveſt grace to the humble: Grant this, O Lord, for his ſake, who humbled himſelf unto the Death of the Croſs, Jeſus Chriſt.

For the Fear of God.

O Glorious Majeſty, who only art high and to be feared, poſſeſs my Soul with a holy awe and reverence of thee, that I may give thee the honour due unto thy Name, and may bear ſuch a reſpect to all things which relate to thee, that I may never profane any holy thing, or ſacrilegiouſly invade what thou haſt ſet apart to thy ſelf. And, O Lord, ſince thou art a God that wilt not clear the guilty, let the dread of thy juſtice make me tremble to provoke thee in any thing. O let me not ſo miſplace my fear, as to be afraid of a Man that ſhall die, and of the ſon of Man, who ſhall be made as graſs, and forget the Lord my Maker; but repleniſh my Soul with that fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of Wiſdom, which may be as a bridle to all my brutiſh appetites, and keep me in a conſtant conformity to thy holy Will. Hear me, O Lord, I beſeech thee, and put this fear in my heart, that I may not depart from thee, but may with fear and trembling work out my own ſalvation, through Jeſus Chriſt.

For Truſt on God.

O Almighty Lord, who never faileſt them that truſt on thee, Give me Grace, I beſeech thee, in all my difficulties and diſtreſſes, to have recourſe to thee, to reſt and depend on thee: Thou ſhalt keep him, O Lord, in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtaid on thee. O let me always reſt on this firm Pillar, and never exchange it for the broken reeds of worldly ſuccours; ſuffer not my heart to be overcharged with the cares of this life, taking thought what I ſhall eat, or drink, or wherewithal I ſhall be cloathed, but grant that having by honeſt labour and induſtry done my part, I may chearfully commit my ſelf to thy providence, caſting all my care upon thee; and being careful for nothing, but to be of the number of thoſe whom thou owneſt and careſt for, even ſuch as keep thy Teſtimonies, and think upon thy Commandments to do them. That ſeeking firſt thy Kingdom and the righteouſneſs thereof, all theſe outward things may be added unto me in ſuch a meaſure as thy wiſdom knows beſt for me; grant this, O Lord, for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake.

For Thankfulneſs.

O Moſt gracious and bountiful Lord, who filleſt all things living with good, and expecteſt no other return, but praiſe and thankſgiving; let me, O Lord, never defraud thee of that ſo eaſie tribute, but let my heart be ever filled with the ſenſe, and my mouth with the acknowledgement of thy mercies. It is a joyful and pleaſant thing to be thankful; O ſuffer me not, I beſeech thee, to loſe my part in that Divine pleaſure; but grant that as I daily receive bleſſings from thee, ſo I may daily from an affectionate and devout heart offer up thanks to thee; and grant that not only my lips, but my life may ſhew forth thy praiſe, by conſecrating my ſelf to thy ſervice, and walking in holineſs and righteouſneſs before thee all the days of my life, through Jeſus Chriſt my Lord and bleſſed Saviour.

For Contrition.

O Holy Lord, who art a merciful embracer of true Penitents, but yet a conſuming fire towards obſtinate ſinners; how ſhall I approach thee, who have ſo many provoking ſins to inflame thy wrath, and ſo little ſincere repentance to incline thy mercy! O be thou pleaſed to ſoften and melt this hard obdurate heart of mine, that I may heartily bewail the iniquities of my life; ſtrike this rock, O Lord, that the waters may flow out, even flouds of tears to waſh my polluted Conſcience. My drowzy Soul hath too long ſlept ſecurely in ſin; Lord, awake it, though it be with thunder, and let me rather feel thy terrors than not feel my ſin. Thou ſenteſt thy bleſſed Son to heal the broken hearted; but, Lord, what will that avail me, if my heart be whole? O break it that it may be capable of this healing vertue; and grant, I beſeech thee, that having once taſted the bitterneſs of ſin, I may fly from it as from the face of a Serpent, and bring forth fruits of Repentance in amendment of life, to the praiſe and glory of thy Grace in Jeſus Chriſt our bleſſed Redeemer.

For Meekneſs.

O Bleſſed Jeſu, who waſt led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter, let I beſeech thee, that admirable example of Meekneſs quench in me all ſparks of anger and revenge, and work in me ſuch a gentleneſs and calmneſs of Spirit,

rit, as no provocations may ever be able to diſturb. Lord, grant I may be ſo far from offering the leaſt injury, that I may never return the greateſt, any otherwiſe than with Prayers and kindneſs: that I who have ſo many Talents to be forgiven by thee, may never exact pence of my brethren; but that putting on bowels of mercy, meekneſs, long-ſuffering, thy peace may rule in my heart, and make it an acceptable habitation to thee, who art the Prince of Peace, to whom with the Father and Holy Spirit be all honour and glory for ever.

For Chaſtity.

O Holy and immaculate Jeſus, whoſe firſt deſcent was into the Virgins womb, and who doſt ſtill love to inhabit only in pure and Virgin hearts, I beſeech thee ſend thy Spirit of purity to cleanſe me from all filthineſs both of fleſh and Spirit; my Body, O Lord, is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt; O let me never pollute that Temple with any uncleanneſs. And becauſe out of the heart proceed the things that defile the Man, Lord, grant me to keep my heart with all diligence, that no impure or foul thoughts be harboured there: but enable me I beſeech thee, to keep both Body and Soul pure and undefiled, that ſo I may glorifie thee here both in Body and Spirit, and be glorified in both with Thee hereafter.

For Temperance.

O Gracious Lord, who haſt in thy bounty to Mankind offered to us the uſe of thy good Creatures for our corporal refreſhment: grant that I may always uſe this liberty with thankfulneſs and moderation. O let me never be ſo enſlaved to that brutiſh pleaſure of taſte, that my Table become a ſnare to me; but give me, I beſeech thee, a perfect abhorrence of all degrees of exceſs, and let me eat and drink only for thoſe ends, and according to thoſe meaſures which thou haſt aſſigned me, for health and not for luxury. And, Lord, grant that my purſuits may be not after the meat that periſheth, but after that which endureth to everlaſting life; that hungring and thirſting after righteouſneſs, I may be filled with thy grace, here, and thy glory hereafter, through Jeſus Chriſt.

For Contentedneſs.

O Merciful God, thy Wiſdom is infinite to chuſe, and thy Love forward to diſpenſe good things to us; O let me always fully and entirely reſign my ſelf to thy diſpoſals, have no deſires of my own, but a perfect ſatisfaction in thy choices for me; that ſo in whatſoever eſtate I am, I may be therein content. Lord, grant I may never look with murmuring on my own condition, nor with envy on other mens. And to that end, I beſeech thee, purge my heart of all covetous affections. O let me never yield up any corner of my ſoul to Mammon, but give me ſuch a contempt of theſe fading riches, that whether they encreaſe or decreaſe, I may never ſet my heart upon them, but that all my care may be to be rich towards God, to lay up my treaſure in Heaven; that I may ſo ſet my affections on things above, that when Chriſt who is my life ſhall appear, I may alſo appear with him in glory, Grant this, O Lord, for the merits of the ſame Jeſus Chriſt.

For Diligence.

O Lord, who haſt in thy Wiſdom ordained that Man ſhould be born to labour, ſuffer me not to reſiſt that deſign of thine, by giving my ſelf up to ſloth and idleneſs; but grant I may ſo employ my time, and all other talents thou haſt intruſted me with, that I may not fall under the ſentence of the ſlothful and wicked ſervant. Lord, if it be thy will, make me ſome way uſeful to others, that I may not live an unprofitable part of Mankind; but however, O Lord, let me not be uſeleſs to my ſelf, but grant I may give all diligence to make my calling and election ſure. My ſoul is beſet with many and vigilant adverſaries; O let me not fold my hands to ſleep in the midſt of ſo great dangers, but watch and pray, that I enter not into temptation; enduring hardneſs as a good Souldier of *Jeſus* Chriſt, till at the laſt from this ſtate of warfare, thou tranſlate me to the ſtate of triumph and bliſs in thy Kingdom, through *Jeſus* Chriſt.

For Juſtice.

O Thou King of Righteouſneſs, who haſt commanded us to keep judgment and do juſtice, be pleaſed by thy Grace to cleanſe my heart and hands from all fraud and injuſtice, and give me a perfect integrity and uprightneſs in all my dealings. O make me ever abhor to uſe my power to oppreſs, or my skill to deceive my Brother; and grant I may moſt ſtrictly obſerve that ſacred rule, of doing as I would be done to; that I may not diſhonour my Chriſtian Profeſſion by an unjuſt and fraudulent life, but in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, have my converſation in the world; never ſeeking to heap up treaſures in this life; but preferring a little with righteouſneſs before great revenues without right. Lord, make me exactly careful to render to every Man what by any ſort of obligation becomes his due, that I may never break the bond of any of thoſe relations that thou haſt placed me in, but may ſo behave my ſelf towards all, that none may have any evil thing to ſay of me; that ſo if it be poſſible, I may have peace with all Men, or however, I may, by keeping innocency, and taking heed to the thing that is right, have peace at the laſt, even peace with thee, through *Jeſus* Chriſt our Lord.

For Charity.

O Merciful Lord, who haſt made of one blood, and redeemed by one ranſom all Nations of Men, let me never harden my bowels againſt any that partake of the ſame nature and redemption with me, but grant me an univerſal charity towards all Men. Give me, O thou father of compaſſions ſuch a tenderneſs and meltingneſs of heart, that I may be deeply affected with all the miſeries and calamities outward or inward of my Brethren, and diligently employ all my abilities for their ſuccour and relief. O let not an unchriſtian ſelf-love poſſeſs my heart, but drive out that accurſed Spirit, and let thy Spirit of Love enter and dwell there, and make me ſeek, not to pleaſe my ſelf, but my Neighbour for his good to edification, even as Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf. Lord, make me a faithful Steward of all thoſe Talents thou haſt committed to me for the benefit of others, that ſo when thou ſhalt call me to give an account of my Stewardſhip, I may do it with joy, and not with grief. Grant this, merciful Lord, I beſeech thee, for *Jeſus* Chriſt his ſake.

For Perſeverance.

O Eternal and unchangeable Lord God, who art the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever; be thou pleaſed to communicate ſome ſmall ray of that Excellence, ſome degree of that ſtability to me thy wretched Creature, who am light and unconſtant, turned about with every blaſt; my underſtanding is very deceivable, O ſtabliſh it in thy truth, keep it from the ſnares of ſeducing ſpirits, that I may not be led away with the error of the wicked, and fall from my own ſtedfaſtneſs: My Will alſo, O Lord, is irreſolute and wavering, and doth not cleave ſtedfaſtly unto God; my goodneſs is but as the morning cloud, and as the early dew it paſſeth away. O ſtrengthen and confirm me, and whatever good work thou haſt wrought in me, be pleaſed to accompliſh and perform it until the day of Chriſt. Lord, thou ſeeſt my weakneſs, and thou knoweſt the number and ſtrength of thoſe temptations I have to ſtruggle with. O leave me not to my ſelf, but cover thou my head in the day of battel, and in all ſpiritual combates make me more than Conqueror through him that loved me. O let no terrors or flatteries either of the world or my own fleſh ever draw me from my obedience to thee, but grant that I may continue ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, and, by patient continuing in well-doing ſeek, and at laſt obtain Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, and Eternal Life, through *Jeſus* Chriſt our Lord.

A Brief Paraphraſe *of the*
LORD's PRAYER,
To be uſed as a Prayer.

[*Our Father which art in Heaven,*]

O Lord, who dwelleſt in the higheſt Heavens, thou art the Author of our being, thou haſt alſo begotten us again unto a lively hope, and carrieſt towards us the tenderneſs and bowels of a compaſſionate Father. O make us to render to thee the love and obedience of Children; and that we may reſemble thee *our Father in Heaven* (that place of true delight and purity) give us a holy diſdain of all the deceitful pleaſures and foul pollutions of this world, and ſo raiſe up our minds, that we may always have our converſation in Heaven, from whence we look for our Saviour the Lord *Jeſus* Chriſt.

[1. *Hallowed be thy Name.*]

STrike ſuch an awe in our hearts, that we may humbly reverence thee in *Thy Name*, which is great, wonderful and holy; and carry ſuch a ſacred reſpect to all things that relate to thee and thy worſhip, as may expreſs our reverence to thy great Majeſty. Let all the people praiſe thee, O God, let all the people praiſe thee.

[2. *Thy Kingdom come.*]

EStabliſh thy Throne and rule for ever in our Souls, and by the power of thy grace ſubdue all thoſe rebellious corruptions that exalt themſelves againſt thee: They are thoſe enemies of thine which would not thou ſhould'ſt reign over them. O Let them be brought forth and ſlain before thee; and make us ſuch faithful ſubjects of this thy *Kingdom of Grace*, that we may be capable of the *Kingdom of Glory*, and then Lord *Jeſus* come quickly.

[3. *Thy will be done in Earth*, &c.]

ENable us by thy Grace chearfully to ſuffer *thy Will* in all our afflictions, and readily perform it in all thy commands: give us of that heavenly zeal to thy Service, wherewith the bleſſed Angels of thy preſence are inſpired, that we may obey thee with the like fervour and alacrity, and that following them in their obedience, we may be joyned with them to ſing eternal praiſes in thy Kingdom, to God, and to the Lamb for ever.

[4. *Give us this day our*, &c.]

GIve us that continual ſupply of thy Grace, which may ſuſtain and nouriſh our Souls unto Eternal Life. And be thou pleaſed alſo to provide for our Bodies all thoſe things which thou ſeeſt fit for their ſupport, through this our Earthly Pilgrimage; and make us chearfully to reſt on thee for them, firſt ſeeking thy Kingdom and the righteouſneſs thereof, and then not doubting but all theſe things ſhall be added unto us.

[5. *Forgive us our treſpaſſes*, &c.]

HEal our Souls, O Lord, for we have ſinned againſt thee, let thy tender mercies abound towards us, in the *forgiveneſs of all our offences*; And grant, O Lord, that we may never forfeit this pardon of thine, by denying ours to our Brethren, but give us thoſe bowels of compaſſion to others which we ſtand in ſo much greater need of from thee, that we may *forgive* as fully and finally upon Chriſt's command, as we deſire to be *forgiven*, for his merits and interceſſion.

[6. *Lead us not into Temptation*, &c.]

O Lord, we have no ſtrength againſt thoſe multitudes of *Temptations* that daily aſſault us, only our eyes are upon thee; O be thou pleaſed either to reſtrain them or aſſiſt us, and in thy faithfulneſs ſuffer us not to be *tempted* above what we are able, but in all our temptations make us a way to eſcape, that we be not overcome by them, but may when thou ſhalt call us to it, reſiſt even unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin, that being faithful unto death, thou mayeſt give us the crown of life.

[*For Thine is the Kingdom*, &c.]

HEar us, and graciouſly anſwer our Petitions, for thou art the great *King* over all the Earth, whoſe *Power* is infinite, and art able to do for us above all that we can ask or think, and to whom belongeth the *Glory* of all that good thou workeſt in us or for us. Therefore bleſſing, honour, glory and power be unto him that ſitteth upon the Throne, to our God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Pious EJACULATIONS *taken out of the Book of* PSALMS.

For Pardon of Sin.

HAve mercy on me, O God, after thy great goodneſs, according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences.
Waſh me throughly from my wickedneſs, and cleanſe me from my ſin.
Turn thy face from my ſins, and put out all my miſdeeds.
My miſdeeds prevail againſt me; O be thou merciful unto my ſins.

Enter not into Judgment with thy ſervant, for in thy ſight ſhall no Man living be juſtified.

For thy Name's ſake, O Lord, be merciful unto my ſin, for it is great.

Turn thee, O Lord, and deliver my Soul, O ſave me for thy mercies ſake.

For Grace.

TEach me to do the thing that pleaſeth thee, for thou art my God.

Teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth ; O knit my heart to thee, that I may fear thy name.

Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me.

O let my heart be ſound in thy Statutes, that I be not aſhamed.

Incline my heart unto thy Teſtimonies, and not to covetouſneſs.

Turn away mines eyes leſt they behold vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way.

I am a ſtranger upon Earth, O hide not thy Commandments from me.

Lord, teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wiſdom.

For the light of God's countenance.

LORD, why abhorreſt thou my Soul, and hideſt thy face from me?

O hide not thou thy face from me, nor caſt thy ſervant away in diſpleaſure.

Thy loving kindneſs is better than life it ſelf.

Lord lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon me.

Comfort the Soul of thy ſervant, for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my Soul.

Thankſgiving.

I Will always give thanks unto the Lord, his praiſe ſhall ever be in my Mouth.

Thou art my God, and I will thank thee, thou art my God, and I will praiſe thee.

I will ſing unto the Lord, as long as I live, I will praiſe my God whilſt I have my being.

Praiſed be God, which hath not caſt out my Prayer, nor turned his mercy from me.

Bleſſed by the Lord God, even the God of Iſrael, which only doth wondrous things.

And bleſſed be the Name of his Majeſty for ever, and all the Earth ſhall be filled with his Majeſty. *Amen, Amen.*

For Deliverance from Trouble.

BE merciful unto me, O Lord, be merciful unto me, for my Soul truſteth in thee, and under the ſhadow of thy wings ſhall be my refuge until theſe calamities be over-paſt.

Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies, for I flee unto thee to hide me.

O keep my Soul and deliver me: Let me not be confounded, for I have put my truſt in thee.

Mine eyes are ever looking unto the Lord, for he ſhall pluck my feet out of the net.

Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me: for I am deſolate and in miſery.

The ſorrows of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my Troubles.

For the Church.

O Be favourable and gracious unto Sion, build thou the walls of Jeruſalem.

O God, wherefore art thou abſent from us ſo long? Why is thy wrath ſo hot againſt the ſheep of thy paſture?

O think upon thy Congregation, whom thou haſt purchaſed and Redeemed of old.

Look upon the Tribe of thine inheritance, and Mount Sion where thou haſt dwelt.

It is time for thee, Lord, to lay to thy hand, for they have deſtroyed thy Law.

Ariſe, O God, and maintain thine own cauſe: deliver Iſrael, O God, out of all his troubles.

Brief Heads of Self-Examination, eſpecially before the Sacrament, collected out of the foregoing Treatiſe, concerning the breaches of our Duty.

To GOD.

FAITH.

Not believing there is a God.

Not believing his Word.

Not believing it practically, ſo as to live according to our belief.

HOPE.

Deſpairing of God's Mercy, ſo as to neglect duty.

Preſuming groundleſly on it, whilſt we go on in wilful ſin.

LOVE.

Not loving God for his own Excellencies.

Not loving him for his goodneſs to us.

Not labouring to pleaſe him.

Not deſiring to draw near to him in his Ordinances.

Not longing to enjoy him in Heaven.

FEAR.

Not fearing God ſo as to keep from offending him.

Fearing man above him, by committing ſin, to ſhun ſome outward ſuffering.

TRUST.

Not truſting on God in dangers and diſtreſſes.

Uſing unlawful means to bring us out of them.

Not depending on God for ſupply of our Wants.

Immoderate Care for outward things.

Neglecting to labour and expecting God ſhould ſupport us in our idleneſs.

Not looking up to God for a bleſſing on our honeſt endeavours.

HUMILITY.

Not having a high eſteem of God.

Not ſubmitting obediently to all his Will.

Not patiently ſuffering it, but murmuring at his corrections.

Not amending by them.

Not being thankful to him.

Not acknowledging his Wiſdom in chuſing for us, but having eager and impatient deſires of our own.

HONOUR.

Not honouring God by a reverent uſage of the things that relate to him.

Behaving our ſelves irreverently in his Houſe.

Robbing God by taking things that are conſecrated to him.

Profaning Holy Times, the Lord's Day, and the Feaſts and Faſts of the Church.

Neglecting to read the Holy Scriptures, not

not marking when we do read.

Being careleſs to get knowledge of our duty, chuſing rather to continue ignorant, than put our ſelves to the pains or charge of learning.

Placing Religion in hearing of Sermons, without Practice.

Breaking our vow made at Baptiſm.

By reſorting to Witches and Conjurers, i. e. *to the Devil.*

By loving the Pomps and Vanities of the World, and following its ſinful cuſtoms.

By fulfilling the luſts of the fleſh.

Prophaning the Lord's Supper.

By coming to it ignorantly, without Examination, Contrition, and purpoſes of New Life.

By behaving our ſelves irreverently at it, without Devotion and ſpiritual Affection.

By neglecting to keep the Promiſes made at it.

Profaning God's Name, by blaſphemous thoughts, or Diſcourſe.

Giving others occaſion to Blaſpheme him by our vile and wicked lives.

Taking unlawful OATHS.

Perjury.

Swearing in ordinary Communication.

WORSHIP.

N*Ot Worſhipping God.*

Omitting Prayers publick or private, and being glad of a pretence to do ſo.

Asking unlawful things, or to unlawful ends.

Not purifying our hearts from ſin before we pray.

Not praying with Faith and Humility.

Coldneſs and deadneſs in Prayer.

Wandering thoughts in it.

Irreverent geſtures of Body in Prayer.

REPENTANCE.

N*Eglecting the duty of Repentance.*

Not calling our ſelves to daily account for our ſins.

Not aſſigning any ſet or ſolemn times for Humiliation, and Confeſſion, or too ſeldom.

Not deeply conſidering our ſins, to beget Contrition.

Not acting revenge upon our ſelves, by Faſting, and other acts of Mortification.

IDOLATRY.

O*Utward Idolatry in Worſhipping of Creatures.*

Inward Idolatry, in placing our love, and other affections more on Creatures than the Creator.

To our SELVES.

HUMILITY.

B*Eing puft up with high conceits of our ſelves.*

In reſpect of Natural Parts, as Beauty Wit, &c.

Of worldly Riches and Honours.

Of Grace.

Greedily ſeeking the praiſe of men.

Directing Chriſtian Actions, as Prayer, Alms, &c. *to that end.*

Committing ſins to avoid reproach from wicked men.

MEEKNES.

D*Iſturbing our minds with Anger and peeviſhneſs.*

CONSIDERATION.

N*Ot carefully Examining what our eſtate towards God is.*

Not trying our ſelves by the true Rule, i. e. *our obedience to God's Commands.*

Not weighing the Lawfulneſs of our Actions before we venture on them.

Not examining our paſt Actions, to repent of the ill, to give God the Glory of the good.

CONTENTEDNES.

U*Ncontentedneſs in our Eſtates.*

Greedy deſires after Honour and Riches.

Seeking to gain them by ſinful means.

Envying the condition of other men.

DILIGENCE, WATCHFULNES.

B*Eing Negligent in obſerving and reſiſting temptations.*

Not improving God's Gifts outward, or inward, to his Honour.

Abuſing our natural parts, as Wit, Memory, &c. to ſin.
Neglecting or reſiſting the motions of God's Spirit.

CHASTITY.

Uncleanneſs, Adultery, Fornication, Vnnatural Luſts, &c.
Vncleanneſs of the Eye and Hand.
Filthy and obſcene Talking.
Impure Fancies and Deſires.
Heightning of Luſt by pampering the body.
Not labouring to ſubdue it by Faſting, or other ſeverities.

TEMPERANCE.

Eating too much.
Making pleaſure, not health, the end of Eating.
Being too curious or coſtly in Meats.
Drunkenneſs.
Drinking more than is uſeful to our bodies, though not to Drunkenneſs.
Waſting the time or Eſtate in good Fellowſhip.
Abuſing our ſtrength of brain to the making others Drunk.
Immoderate Sleeping.
Idleneſs and Negligence in our Callings.
Vſing unlawful Recreations.
Being too vehement upon Lawful ones.
Spending too much time at them.
Being drawn by them to Anger or Covetouſneſs.
Being proud of Apparel.
Striving to go beyond our rank.
Beſtowing too much time, care or coſt about it.
Abſtaining from ſuch Exceſſes, not out of conſcience but covetouſneſs.
Pinching our Bodies to fill our Purſes.

To our NEIGHBOUR.

NEGATIVE JUSTICE.

Being injurious to our Neighbour.
Delighting cauſleſly to grieve his mind.
Enſnaring his Soul in ſin, by Command, Counſel, Enticement or Example.
Affrighting him from godlineſs, by our ſcoffing at it.
Not ſeeking to bring thoſe to Repentance whom we have led into ſin.

MURDER.

Murder open or ſecret.
Drawing men to intemperance or other vices which may bring diſeaſes or death.
Stirring men up to quarrelling and fighting.
Maiming or hurting the body of our Neighbour.
Fierceneſs and Rage againſt him.

ADULTERY.

Coveting our Neighbours's Wife.
Actually defiling her.

MALICE.

Spoiling the Goods of others upon ſpight and malice.

COVETOUSNES.

Coveting to gain them to our ſelves.

OPPRESSION.

Oppreſſion by violence and force, or colour of Law.

THEFT.

Not Paying what we borrow.
Not paying what we have voluntarily promiſed.
Keeping back the Wages of the Servant and hireling.

DECEIT.

Unfaithfulneſs in Truſts, whether to the living or Dead.
Vſing arts of deceit in Buying and Selling.
Exacting upon the neceſſities of our Neighbours.

FALSE-WITNES.

Blaſting the credit of our Neighbour.
By falſe Witneſs.
By railing.
By Whiſpering.
Incouraging others in their Slanders.

Being forward to believe all ill reports of our Neighbour.
Cauſleſs ſuſpicions.
Raſh judging of him.
Deſpiſing him for his infirmities.
Inviting others to do ſo, by ſcoffing and deriding him.
Bearing any Malice in the heart.
Secret wiſhing of death or hurt to our Neighbour.
Rejoycing when any evil befals him.
Neglecting to make what ſatisfaction we can, for any ſort of injury done to our Neighbour.

POSITIVE JUSTICE, HUMILITY, LYING.

CHurliſh and proud behaviour to others.
Froward and peeviſh converſation.
Bitter and reproachful language.
Curſing.
Not paying the reſpect due to the qualities or gifts of others.
Proudly overlooking them.
Seeking to leſſen others eſteem of them.
Not employing our Abilities, whether of Mind or Eſtate, in adminiſtring to thoſe whoſe wants require it.

GRATITUDE.

UNthankfulneſs to our Benefactors. Eſpecially thoſe that admoniſh us.
Not amending upon their reproof.
Being angry at them for it.
Not reverencing our Civil Parent, the lawful Magiſtrate.
Judging and ſpeaking evil of him.
Grudging his juſt Tributes.
Sowing ſedition among people.
Refuſing to obey his lawful Commands.
Riſing up againſt him, or taking part with them that do.
Deſpiſing our Spiritual Fathers.
Not loving them for their works ſake.
Not obeying thoſe commands of God they deliver to us.
Seeking to withhold from them their juſt maintenance.
Forſaking our lawful Paſtors to follow factious Teachers.

PARENTS.

STubborn and irreverent behaviour to our natural Parents.
Deſpiſing and publiſhing their infirmities.
Not loving them, nor endeavouring to bring them comfort.
Contemning their Counſels.
Murmuring at their Government.
Coveting their Eſtates, though by their death.
Not miniſtring to them in their wants of all ſorts.
Neglecting to pray for God's Bleſſing on the ſeveral ſorts of Parents.
Want of natural affection to Children.
Mothers refuſing to Nurſe them without a juſt impediment.
Not bringing them timely to Baptiſm.
Not early inſtructing them in the ways of God.
Suffering them for want of timely correction to get cuſtoms of ſin.
Setting them evil Examples.
Diſcouraging them by harſh and cruel uſage.
Not providing for their ſubſiſtence according to our ability.
Conſuming their portions in our own riot.
Reſerving all till our death, and letting them want in the mean time.
Not ſeeking to entail a bleſſing on them by our Chriſtian lives.
Not heartily praying for them.
Want of affection to our Natural Brethren.
Envyings and heart-burnings towards them.

DUTY to BRETHREN.

NOt loving our Spiritual Brethren, i. e. *our fellow-Chriſtians.*
Having no fellow-feeling of their ſufferings.
Cauſleſly forſaking their communion in Holy Duties.
Not taking deeply to heart the Deſolations of the Church.

MARRIAGE.

MArrying within the degrees forbidden.
Marrying for undue ends, as covetouſneſs, luſt, &c.
Unkind, froward, and unquiet behaviour towards the Husband or Wife.

Unfaithfulneſs to the Bed.
Not bearing with the infirmities of each other.
Not endeavouring to advance one another's good, ſpiritual or temporal.
The Wife reſiſting the lawful Commands of her Husband.
Her ſtriving for Rule and Dominion over him.
Not praying for each other.

FRIENDSHIP.

Unfaithfulneſs to a Friend.
Betraying his ſecrets.
Denying him aſſiſtance in his needs.
Neglecting lovingly to admoniſh him.
Flattering him in his faults.
Forſaking his friendſhip upon ſlight or no cauſe.
Making leagues in ſin inſtead of vertuous friendſhip.

SERVANTS.

Servants diſobeying the lawful Commands of their Maſters.
Purloining their goods.
Careleſly waſting them.
Murmuring at their rebukes.
Idleneſs.
Eye-ſervice.

MASTERS.

Maſters uſing ſervants tyrannically and cruelly.
Being too remiſs, and ſuffering them to neglect their duty.
Having no care of their Souls.
Not providing them means of inſtruction in Religion.
Not admoniſhing them when they commit ſins.
Not allowing them time and opportunity for Prayer, and the worſhip of God.

CHARITY.

Want of bowels and Charity to our Neighbours.
Not heartily deſiring their good, ſpiritual or temporal.
Not loving and forgiving enemies.
Taking actual Revenges upon them.
Falſeneſs, profeſſing kindneſs and acting none.
Not labouring to do all the good we can to the Soul of our Neighbour.
Not aſſiſting him to our power in his bodily diſtreſſes.
Not defending his good Name, when we know him ſlander'd.
Denying him any neighbourly office to preſerve or advance his eſtate.
Not defending him from oppreſſion when we have power.
Not relieving him in his poverty.
Not giving liberally, and chearfully.

GOING TO LAW.

Not loving PEACE.
Going to Law upon ſlight occaſions.
Bearing inward Enmity to thoſe we ſue.
Not labouring to make Peace among others.

The uſe of this Catalogue *of* Sins *is this, Upon days of* Humiliation, *eſpecially before the* Sacrament *read them conſideringly over, and at every particular ask thy own heart,* Am I guilty of this? *And whatſoever by ſuch Examination thou findeſt thy ſelf faulty in, Confeſs particularly, and humbly to God, with all the heightning circumſtances, which may any way increaſe their guilts, and make ſerious reſolutions againſt every ſuch Sin for the future; after which thou mayeſt uſe this Form following,*

O LORD, I am aſhamed, and bluſh to lift up my face to thee, for my Iniquities are increaſed over my head, and my treſpaſs is grown up even unto Heaven. I have wrought all theſe great provocations, and that in the moſt provoking manner; they have not been only ſingle but repeated acts of ſin: For, O Lord, of all this black Catalogue which I have now brought forth before thee, how few are there which I have not often committed? Nay, which are not become even habitual and cuſtomary to me? And to this frequency, I have added both a greedineſs, and obſtinacy in ſinning, turning into my courſe as the Horſe ruſheth into the battel, doing evil with both hands, earneſtly, yea, hating to be reformed, and caſting thy words behind me, quenching thy Spirit within me, which teſtified againſt me, to turn me from my evil ways; and fruſtrating all thoſe outward means, whether of judgment or mercy, which thou haſt uſed to draw me to thy ſelf. Nay, O Lord, even my repentances may be numbred amongſt my greateſt ſins: They have ſometimes been feigned and hypocritical, always ſo ſlight and ineffectual, that they have brought forth no fruit in amendment of life; but I have ſtill returned with the Dog to the vomit, and the Sow to the mire again, and have added the breach of reſolutions and vows, to all my former guilts. Thus, O Lord, I am become out of meaſure ſinful, and ſince I have thus choſen death, I am moſt worthy to take part in it, even in the ſecond death, the lake of fire and Brimſtone. This, this, O Lord, is in juſtice to be the portion of my cup; to me belongs nothing but ſhame and confuſion of Face Eternally; But to thee, O Lord God, belongeth mercy and forgiveneſs, though I have rebelled againſt thee: O remember not my ſins and offences, but according to thy mercy think thou upon me, O Lord, for thy goodneſs. Thou ſenteſt thy Son to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt; behold, O Lord, I have gone a-ſtray like a ſheep that is loſt: O ſeek thy ſervant, and bring me back to the Shepherd and Biſhop of my Soul. Let thy Spirit work in me a hearty ſenſe and deteſtation of all my abominations, that true contrition of heart, which thou haſt promiſed not to deſpiſe. And then be thou pleaſed to look on me, to take away all iniquity, and receive me graciouſly; and for his ſake who hath done nothing amiſs, be reconciled to me who have done nothing well; waſh away the guilt of my ſins in his blood, and ſubdue the power of them by his grace: And grant, O Lord, that I may from this hour bid a final adieu to all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, that I may never once more caſt a look towards *Sodom*, or long after the fleſh-pots of *Egypt*; but conſecrate my ſelf entirely to thee, to ſerve thee in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs, reckoning my ſelf to be dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God through *Jeſus* Chriſt our Lord and bleſſed Saviour.

This Penitential Pſalm *may alſo fitly be uſed.*

PSALM 51.

HAVE mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodneſs, according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences.

Waſh me throughly from my wickedneſs, and cleanſe me from my ſin.

For I acknowledge my faults, and my ſin is ever before me.

Againſt thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight, that thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſaying, and clear when thou art judged.

Behold I was ſhapen in wickedneſs, and in ſin hath my mother conceived me.

But lo, thou requireſt truth in the inward parts, and ſhalt make me to underſtand wiſdom ſecretly.

Thou ſhalt purge me with Hyſſop, and I ſhall be clean, thou ſhalt waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than ſnow.

Thou ſhalt make me hear of joy and gladneſs, that the bones which thou haſt broken may rejoyce.

Turn thy face from my ſins, and put out all my miſdeeds.

Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me.

Caſt me not away from thy preſence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

O give me the comfort of thy help again and ſtabliſh me with thy free Spirit.

Then ſhall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, and ſinners ſhall be converted unto thee.

Deliver me from blood guiltineſs, O God, thou that art the God of my health, and my tongue ſhall ſing of thy Righteouſneſs.

Thou ſhalt open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy praiſe.

For thou deſireſt no ſacriſice, elſe would I give it thee: but thou delighteſt not in burnt-offering.

The ſacriſice of God is a troubled ſpirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, ſhalt thou not deſpiſe.

O be ſavourable and gracious unto Sion, *build thou the walls of* Jeruſalem.

Then ſhalt thou be pleaſed with the ſacriſices of righteouſneſs, with the burnt-offerings and oblations; then they ſhall offer young bullocks upon thine Altar.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever ſhall be, world without end, *Amen.*

PRAYERS before the Receiving of the Bleſſed SACRAMENT.

O Moſt merciful God, who haſt in thy great goodneſs prepared this ſpiritual feaſt for ſick and famiſh'd Souls, make my deſires and gaſping after it, anſwerable to my needs of it. I have, with the prodigal, waſted that portion of grace thou beſtowedſt upon me; and therefore do infinitely want a ſupply out of this treaſury: But, O Lord, how ſhall ſuch a wretch as I dare to approach this holy Table? I am a dog, how ſhall I preſume to take the childrens bread? Or how ſhall this ſpiritual Manna, this food of Angels, be given to one who hath choſen to feed on husks with Swine? Nay, to one who hath already ſo often trampled theſe precious things under foot, either careleſly neglecting, or unworthily receiving theſe Holy Myſteries? O Lord, my horrible guiltineſs makes me tremble to come, and yet makes me not dare to keep away; for where, O Lord, ſhall my polluted Soul be waſhed, if not in this fountain which thou haſt opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs; Hither therefore I come, and thou haſt promiſed, that him that cometh to thee, thou wilt in no wiſe caſt out: This is, O Lord, the blood of the New Teſtament; grant me ſo to receive it, that it may be to me for remiſſion of ſins, and though I have ſo often and ſo wretchedly broken my part of that Covenant, whereof this Sacrament is a ſeal, yet be thou graciouſly pleaſed to make good thine; to be merciful to my unrighteouſneſs, and to remember my ſins and my iniquities no more: and not only ſo, but to put thy laws into my heart, and to write them in my mind, and by the power of thy grace diſpoſe my Soul to ſuch a ſincere and conſtant obedience, that I may never again provoke thee. Lord, grant that in theſe holy Myſteries I may not only commemorate, but effectually receive my bleſſed Saviour, and all the benefits of his Paſſion: And to that end give me ſuch a preparation of Soul as may qualifie me for it; give me a deep ſenſe of my ſins and unworthineſs, that being weary and heavy laden, I may be capable of his refreſhings, and by being ſuppled in my own tears, I may be the fitter to be waſhed in his blood; raiſe up my dull and earthly mind from groveling here below, and inſpire it with a holy zeal, that I may with ſpiritual affection approach this ſpiritual feaſt; and let, O Lord, that infinite love of Chriſt in dying for ſo wretched a ſinner, inflame my frozen benumb'd Soul, and kindle in me that ſacred fire of love to him, and that ſo vehement, that no waters may quench, no flouds drown it, ſuch as may burn up all my droſs, not leave one unmortified luſt in my Soul: And ſuch as may alſo extend it ſelf to all whom thou haſt given me command and example to love, even enemies as well as friends. Finally, O Lord, I beſeech thee to clothe me in the wedding garment, and make me, though of my ſelf a moſt unworthy, yet by thy mercy an acceptable gueſt at this holy Table; that I may not eat nor drink my own condemnation, but may have my pardon ſealed, my weakneſs repaired, my corruptions ſubdued, and my Soul ſo inſeparably united to thee, that no temptations may ever be able to diſſolve the union, but that being begun here in grace, it may be conſummated in Glory. Grant this, O Lord, for thy dear Son's ſake, *Jeſus* Chriſt.

Another.

O Bleſſed *Jeſus*, who once offeredſt up thy ſelf for me upon the Croſs, and now offereſt thy ſelf to me in the Sacrament, let not I beſeech thee, my impenitence and unworthineſs fruſtrate theſe ſo ineſtimable mercies to me, but qualifie me by thy grace to receive the full benefit of them. O Lord, I have abundant need of thee, but am ſo clogg'd with guilt, ſo holden with the cords of my ſins, that I am not able to move towards thee. O looſe me from this band, wherewith Satan and my own luſts have bound me, and draw me that I may run after thee. O Lord, thou ſeeſt daily how eagerly I purſue the paths that lead to death; but when thou inviteſt me to life and glory, I turn my back, and forſake my own mercy. How often hath this feaſt been prepared, and I have with frivolous excuſes abſented my ſelf! or if I have come, it hath been rather to defie than to adore thee; I have brought ſuch troops of thy profeſſed enemies, unrepented ſins along with me, as if I came not to commemorate, but renew thy paſſion, crucifying thee afreſh, and putting thee to open ſhame. And now of what puniſhment ſhall I be thought worthy, who have thus trampled under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing; Yet O merciful *Jeſu*, this blood is my only refuge: O let this make my atonement, or I periſh eternally. Wherefore didſt thou ſhed it, but to ſave ſinners; Neither can the merit of it be overwhelmed either by the greatneſs or number of ſins. I am a ſinner, a great one. O let me find its ſaving efficacy. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful to me, for my Soul truſteth in thee, and in the clefts of thy wounds ſhall be my refuge, until thy Father's indignation be overpaſt. O thou who haſt as my high Prieſt ſacrificed for me, interceed for me alſo, and plead thy meritorious ſufferings on my behalf, and ſuffer not, O my Redeemer, the price of thy blood to be utterly loſt: and grant, O Lord, that as the ſins I have to be forgiven are many, ſo I may love much. Lord, thou ſeeſt what faint, what cold affections I have towards thee; O warm and enliven them: And as in this Sacrament that tranſcendent love of thine in dying for me is ſhed forth, ſo I beſeech thee let it convey ſuch grace into me as may enable me to make ſome returns of love: O let this divine fire deſcend from Heaven into my Soul, and let my ſins be the burnt-offering for it to conſume, that there may not any corrupt affection, any curſed thing be ſheltred in my heart; that I may never again defile that place which thou haſt choſen for thy Temple. Thou diedſt, O dear *Jeſu*, to redeem me from all iniquity, O let me not again ſell my ſelf to work wickedneſs. But grant that I may approach thee at this time with moſt ſincere and fixed reſolutions of an entire reformation, and let me receive ſuch grace and ſtrength from thee, as may enable me faithfully to perform them. Lord there are many old habituated diſeaſes my Soul groans under. [*Here mention thy moſt prevailing corruptions.*] And though I lie never ſo long at the Pool of *Betheſda*, come never ſo often to thy Table, yet unleſs thou be pleaſed to put forth thy healing vertue, they will ſtill remain uncured. O thou bleſſed Phyſician of Souls, heal me, and grant that I may now ſo touch thee, that every one of theſe loathſom iſſues may immediately ſtanch, that theſe ſickneſſes may not be unto death, but unto the glory of thy mercy in pardoning, to the glory of thy grace in purifying ſo polluted a wretch. O Chriſt hear me, and grant I may now approach thee with ſuch humility and contrition, love and devotion, that thou mayeſt vouchſafe to come unto me, and abide with me, communicating to me thy ſelf, and all the merits of thy Paſſion. And then, O Lord, let no accuſations of Satan, or my own Conſcience amaze or diſtract me, but having peace with thee, let me alſo have peace in my ſelf, that this Wine may make glad, this Bread of Life may ſtrengthen my heart, and enable me chearfully to run the way of thy Commandments. Grant this, merciful Saviour, for thine own bowels and compaſſions ſake.

EJACULATIONS to be uſed at the LORD'S SUPPER.

LORD, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt come under my roof. I have ſinned: What ſhall I do unto thee, O thou preſerver of Men?

[*Here recollect ſome of thy greateſt ſins.*]

If thou, Lord, ſhouldeſt be extreme to mark what is done amiſs, O Lord, who may abide it?

But with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous Redemption.

Behold, O Lord, thy beloved Son, in whom thou art well pleaſed.

Hearken to the cry of his blood, which ſpeaketh better things than that of *Abel.*

By his Agony and bloody Sweat, by his Croſs and Paſſion, good Lord deliver me.

O Lamb of God, which takeſt away the ſins of the world, grant me thy Peace.

O Lamb of God, which takeſt away the ſins of the world, have mercy upon me.

Immediately before Receiving.

THou haſt ſaid that he that eateth thy fleſh, and drinketh thy blood hath Eternal Life.

Behold the ſervant of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word.

At the Receiving of the Bread.

BY thy Crucified Body deliver me from this body of death.

At the Receiving of the Cup.

O Let this blood of thine purge my Conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God.

Lord, if thou wilt thou canſt make me clean.

O touch me, and ſay, I will, be thou clean.

After Receiving.

WHat ſhall I render unto the Lord for all the benefits he hath done unto me?

I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.

Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing.

Therefore bleſſing, honour, glory and power, be to him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. *Amen.*

I have ſworn, and am ſtedfaſtly purpoſed to keep thy righteous judgments.

O hold thou up my goings in thy paths, that my footſteps ſlip not.

A Thankſgiving after the receiving of the Sacrament.

O Thou Fountain of all goodneſs, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh, and to whom all honour and glory ſhould be returned, I deſire with all the moſt fervent and inflamed affections of a grateful heart, to bleſs and praiſe thee for thoſe ineſtimable mercies thou haſt vouchſafed me. Lord, what is Man that thou ſhouldeſt ſo regard him, as to ſend thy beloved Son to ſuffer ſuch bitter things for him? But, Lord, what am I, the worſt of men that I ſhould have any part in this atonement, who have ſo often deſpiſed him and his ſufferings? O the height and depth of this mercy of thine, that art pleaſed to admit me to the renewing of that Covenant with thee, which I have ſo often and ſo perverſly broken! That I, who am not worthy of that daily bread which ſuſtains the Body, ſhould be made partaker of this bread of Life, which nouriſheth the Soul, and that the God of all purity ſhould vouchſafe to unite himſelf to ſo polluted a wretch! O my God ſuffer me no more, I beſeech thee, to turn thy grace into wantonneſs, to make thy mercy an occaſion of ſecurity, but let this unſpeakable love of thine conſtrain me to obedience, that ſince my bleſſed Lord hath died for me, I may no longer live unto my ſelf, but to him. O Lord, I know there is no concord between Chriſt and *Belial*, therefore ſince he hath now been pleaſed to enter my heart, O let me never permit any luſt to chaſe him thence, but let him that hath ſo dearly bought me, ſtill keep poſſeſſion of me, and let nothing ever take me out of his hand. To this end be thou graciouſly pleaſed to watch over me, and defend me from all aſſaults of my ſpiritual Enemies; but eſpecially deliver me from my ſelf, from the treachery of my own heart, which is too willing to yield it ſelf a prey. And where thou ſeeſt I am either by nature or cuſtom moſt weak, there do thou, I beſeech thee, magnifie thy power in my preſervation. [*Here mention thy moſt dangerous temptations.*] And Lord, let my Saviour's ſufferings for my ſins, and the Vows I have now made againſt them never depart from my mind; but let the remembrance of the one enable me to perform the other, that I may never make truce with thoſe luſts which nailed his hands, pierced his ſide, and made his Soul heavy to the death: But that having now a-new liſted my ſelf under his banner, I may fight manfully, and follow the Captain of my Salvation, even through a Sea of blood. Lord, lift up my hands that hang down and my feeble knees that I faint not in this warfare: O be thou my ſtrength, who am not able of my ſelf to ſtruggle with the ſlighteſt temptations. How often have I turned my back in the day of battel; How many of theſe Sacramental vows have I violated? And Lord, I have ſtill the ſame unconſtant deceitful heart to betray me to the breach of this. O thou who art Yea and Amen, in whom there is no ſhadow of change, communicate to me, I beſeech thee, ſuch a ſtability of mind, that I may no more thus ſtart aſide like a broken bow; but that having my heart whole with thee, I may continue ſtedfaſt in thy Covenant, that not one good purpoſe which thy Spirit hath raiſed in me this day may vaniſh, as ſo many have formerly done, but that they may bring forth fruit unto life Eternal. Grant this, O merciful Father, through the merits and mediation of my Crucified Saviour.

A Prayer of Interceſſion to be uſed either before or after the Receiving of the Sacrament.

O Moſt gracious Lord, who ſo tenderly lovedſt Mankind, as to give thy dear ſon out of thy boſom to be a propitiation for the ſins of the whole world, grant that the effect of this Redemption may be as univerſal as the deſign of it, that it may be to the Salvation of all. O let no perſon by impenitence and wilful ſin forfeit his part in it, but by the power of thy grace bring all, even the moſt obſtinate ſinners to repentance. Enlighten all that ſit in darkneſs, all Jews, Turks, Infidels and Hereticks; take from them all blindneſs, hardneſs of Heart and contempt of thy Word, and ſo fetch them home, bleſſed Lord, unto thy fold, that they may be ſaved among the number of the true Iſraelites. And for all thoſe, upon whom the Name of thy Son is called: Grant, O Lord, that their converſations may be ſuch as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt; that his Name may be no longer blaſphemed among the Heathens through us. O bleſſed Lord, how long ſhall Chriſtendom continue the vileſt part of the world, a ſink of all thoſe abominable pollutions, which even Barbarians deteſt? O let not our profeſſion and our practice be always at ſo wide a diſtance. Let not the diſciples of the holy and immaculate *Jeſus* be of all others the moſt profane and impure. Let not the ſubjects of the Prince of Peace be of all others the moſt contentious and bloody; But make us Chriſtians in deed as well as in name, that we may walk worthy of that holy Vocation wherewith we are called, and may all with one mind and one mouth glorifie thee the Father of our Lord *Jeſus* Chriſt. Have mercy on this languiſhing Church, look down from Heaven the Habitation of thy holineſs and of thy glory. Where is thy zeal and thy ſtrength, the ſounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies towards us? Are they reſtrained? Be not wroth very ſore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever, but though our backſlidings are many, and we have grievouſly rebelled, yet according to all thy goodneſs, let thy anger and thy fury be turned away, and cauſe thy face to ſhine upon thy Sanctuary which is deſolate, for the Lord's ſake; and ſo ſeparate between us and our ſins, that they may no longer ſeparate between us and our God. Save and defend all Chriſtian Kings, Princes and Governours, eſpecially thoſe to whom we owe ſubjection; plead thou their cauſe, O Lord, againſt thoſe that ſtrive with them, and fight thou againſt thoſe that fight againſt them: And ſo guide and aſſiſt them in the diſcharge of that Office whereunto thou haſt appointed them, that under them we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty. Bleſs them that wait at thine Altar, open thou their lips that their mouth may ſhew forth thy praiſe. O let not the Lights of the World be put under buſhels, but place them in their Candleſticks, that they may give light to all that are in the houſe. Let not *Jeroboam*'s Prieſts profane thy Service, but let the ſeed of *Aaron* ſtill miniſter before thee. And, O thou Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, ſuccour and relieve all that are in affliction; deliver the outcaſt and poor, help them to right that ſuffer wrong, let the ſorrowful ſighing of the Priſoners come before thee, and according to the greatneſs of thy power, preſerve thou thoſe that are appointed to die; grant eaſe to thoſe that are in pain, ſupplies to thoſe that ſuffer want, give to all preſumptuous ſinners a ſenſe of their ſins, and to all deſpairing, a ſight of thy mercies; and do thou, O Lord, for every one abundantly above what they can ask or think. Forgive my enemies, perſecutors and ſlanderers, and turn their hearts. Pour down thy bleſſing on all my friends and benefactors, all who have commended themſelves to my Prayers. [*Here thou mayeſt name particular perſons.*] And grant O merciful Father, that through this blood of the Croſs, we may all be preſented pure and unblameable, and unreproveable in thy ſight; that ſo we may be admitted into that place of purity, where no unclean thing can enter, there to ſing eternal Praiſes to Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt for ever.

A Prayer in times of common Perſecution.

O BLESSED Saviour who haſt made the Croſs the badge of thy Diſciples, enable me, I beſeech thee, willingly and chearfully to embrace it: Thou ſeeſt, O Lord, I am fallen into days, wherein he that departeth from evil maketh himſelf a Prey; O make me ſo readily to expoſe all my outward concernments, when my obedience to thee requireth it, that what falls as a Prey to Men, may by thee be accepted as a Sacrifice to God. Lord, preſerve me ſo by thy grace that I never ſuffer as an evil doer; and then, O Lord, if it be my lot to ſuffer as a Chriſtian, let me not be aſhamed, but rejoyce that I am counted worthy to ſuffer for thy Name. O Thou who for my ſake enduredſt the Croſs, and deſpiſedſt the ſhame, let the example of that love and patience prevail againſt all the tremblings of my corrupt heart, that no terrors may ever be able to ſhake my conſtancy, but that how long ſoever thou ſhalt permit the rod of the wicked to lie on my back, I may never put my hand unto wickedneſs. Lord, Thou knoweſt whereof I am made, thou remembreſt that I am but fleſh; and fleſh, O Lord, ſhrinks at the approach of any thing grievous. It is thy Spirit, thy Spirit alone, that can uphold me: O eſtabliſh me with thy free Spirit, that I be not weary and faint in my mind. And by how much the greater thou diſcerneſt my weakneſs, ſo much the more do thou ſhew forth thy power in me, and make me, O Lord, in all temptations ſtedfaſtly to look to thee, the author and finiſher of my faith, that ſo I may run the race which is ſet before me, and reſiſt even unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin. O dear *Jeſus*, hear me, and though Satan deſire to have me, that he may winnow me as wheat, yet do thou, O bleſſed Mediator, pray for me that my faith fail not, but that though it be tried with fire, it may be found unto praiſe and glory, and honour at thy appearing. And, O Lord, I beſeech thee grant that I may preſerve not only conſtancy towards God, but charity alſo towards Men, even thoſe whom thou ſhalt permit to be the inſtruments of my ſufferings: Lord, let me not fail to imitate that admirable meekneſs of thine, in loving and praying for my greateſt perſecutors; and do thou, O Lord, overcome all their evil with thy infinite goodneſs, turn their hearts, and draw them powerfully to thy ſelf, and at laſt receive both me and mine enemies into thoſe manſions of peace and reſt where thou reigneſt with the father, and the Holy Ghoſt, one God for ever.

A Prayer

A Prayer in time of Affliction.

O Juſt and Holy Lord, who with rebukes doſt chaſten Man for ſin, I deſire unfeignedly to humble my ſelf under thy mighty hand, which now lies heavy upon me; I heartily acknowledge, O Lord, that all I do, all I can ſuffer, is but the due reward of my deeds, and therefore in thy ſevereſt inflictions I muſt ſtill ſay, Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are thy Judgments. But, O Lord, I beſeech thee in judgment remember mercy, and though my ſins have enforced thee to ſtrike, yet conſider my weakneſs, and let not thy ſtripes be more heavy or more laſting than thou ſeeſt profitable for my Soul; correct me, but with the chaſtiſement of a Father, not with the wounds of an Enemy; and though thou take not off thy Rod, yet take away thine Anger. Lord, do not abhor my Soul, nor caſt thy ſervant away in diſpleaſure, but pardon my ſins, I beſeech thee; and if yet in thy Fatherly Wiſdom thou ſee fit to prolong thy corrections, thy bleſſed Will be done. I caſt my ſelf, O Lord, at thy feet, do with me what thou pleaſeſt. Try me as ſilver is tried, ſo thou bring me out purified. And Lord, make even my fleſh alſo to ſubſcribe to this reſignation, that there may be nothing in me that may rebel againſt thy hand; but that having perfectly ſuppreſt all repining thoughts, I may chearfully drink of this cup. And how bitter ſoever thou ſhalt pleaſe to make it, Lord, let it prove medicinal, and cure all the diſeaſes of my Soul, that it may bring forth in me the peaceable fruit of Righteouſneſs. That ſo theſe light afflictions which are but for a moment, may work for me a far more exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory, through *Jeſus* Chriſt.

A Thankſgiving for Deliverance.

O Bleſſed Lord, who art gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger and of great kindneſs, and repenteſt thee of the evil, I thankfully acknowledge before thee, that thou haſt not dealt with me after my ſins, nor rewarded me according to my iniquities. My rebellions, O Lord, deſerve to be ſcourged with Scorpions, and thou haſt corrected them only with a gentle and fatherly Rod; neither haſt thou ſuffered me to lie long under that, but haſt given me a timely and a gracious iſſue out of my late diſtreſſes. O Lord, I will be glad and rejoyce in thy mercy, for thou haſt conſidered my trouble, and haſt known my Soul in adverſity. Thou haſt ſmitten and thou haſt healed me. O let theſe various methods of thine have their proper effects upon my Soul, that I who have felt the ſmart of thy Chaſtiſements, may ſtand in awe and not ſin: And that I who have likewiſe felt the ſweet refreſhings of thy mercy, may have my heart raviſhed with it, and knit to thee in the firmeſt bands of love; and that by both I may be preſerved in a conſtant, entire obedience to thee all my days, through *Jeſus* Chriſt.

Directions for the time of Sickneſs.

WHen thou findeſt thy ſelf viſited with Sickneſs, thou art immediately to remember that it is God, which with rebukes doth chaſten Man for ſin. *And therefore let thy firſt care be, to find out what it is that provokes him to ſmite thee; and to that purpoſe examine thine own heart, ſearch diligently what guilts lie there, confeſs them humbly and penitently to God, and for the greater ſecurity renew thy Repentance for all the old ſins of thy former Life, beg moſt earneſtly*

neſtly and importunately his mercy and pardon in Chriſt Jeſus, *and put on ſincere and zealous reſolutions of forſaking every evil way, for the reſt of that time which God ſhall ſpare thee. And that thy own heart deceive thee not in this ſo weighty a buſineſs, it will be wiſdom to ſend for ſome godly* Divine, *not only to aſſiſt thee with his prayers, but with his counſel alſo. And to that purpoſe open thy heart ſo freely to him, that he may be able to judge, whether thy Repentance be ſuch, as may give thee confidence to appear before God's dreadful Tribunal, and that if it be not, he may help thee what he can towards the making it ſo. And when thou haſt thus provided for thy better part, thy Soul, then conſider thy Body alſo, and as the Wiſe Man ſaith,* Ecclus. 38. 2. Give place to the Phyſician, for the Lord hath created him. *Uſe ſuch means as may be moſt likely to recover thy health, but always remember that the ſucceſs of them muſt come from God, and beware of Aſa's ſin, who* ſought to the Phyſicians, and not to the Lord, 2 Chron *6. 12. Diſpoſe alſo betimes of thy temporal affairs, by making thy* Will, *and ſetting all things in ſuch order as thou meaneſt finally to leave them in, and defer it not till thy ſickneſs grow more violent: For then perhaps thou ſhalt not have ſuch uſe of thy Reaſon as may fit thee for it; or if thou have, it will be then much more ſeaſonable to employ thy thoughts on higher things, on the World thou art going to, rather than that thou art about to leave; we cannot carry the things of this world with us when we go hence, and it is not fit we ſhould carry the thoughts of them. Therefore let thoſe be early diſpatched, that they may not diſturb thee at laſt.*

A Prayer for a Sick Perſon.

O Merciful and Righteous Lord, the God of health and of ſickneſs, of Life and of death, I moſt unfeignedly acknowledge that my great abuſe of thoſe many days of ſtrength and welfare, which thou haſt afforded me, hath moſt juſtly deſerved thy preſent Viſitation. I deſire, O Lord, humbly to accept of this puniſhment of mine iniquity, and to bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him. And O Thou merciful Father, who deſigneſt not the ruine, but the amendment of thoſe whom thou ſcourgeſt, I beſeech thee by thy grace ſo to ſanctifie this correction of thine to me, that this ſickneſs of my Body may be a means of health to my Soul; make me diligent to ſearch my heart, and do thou, O Lord enable me to diſcover every accurſed thing how cloſely ſoever concealed there, that by the removal thereof, I may make way for the removal of this puniſhment. Heal my Soul, O Lord, which hath ſinned againſt thee; and then, if it be thy bleſſed Will, heal my Body alſo: Reſtore the voice of joy and health unto my dwelling, that I may live to praiſe thee, and to bring forth fruits of repentance. But if in thy Wiſdom thou haſt otherwiſe diſpoſed, if thou haſt determined that this ſickneſs ſhall be unto death, I beſeech thee to fit and prepare me for it: Give me that ſincere and earneſt repentance to which thou haſt promiſed mercy and pardon; wean my heart from the World, and all its fading Vanities, and make me to gaſp and pant after thoſe more excellent and durable joys, which are at thy right hand for ever. Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me, and in all the pains of my Body, in all the agonies of my ſpirit, let thy comforts refreſh my Soul, and enable me patiently to wait till my change come. And grant, O Lord, that when my earthly houſe of this Tabernacle is diſſolved, I may have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens; and that for his ſake, who by his precious blood hath purchaſed it for me, even *Jeſus* Chriſt.

A Thankſgiving for Recovery.

O Gracious Lord, the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh, in whoſe hand my time is, I praiſe and magnifie thee, that thou haſt in love to my Soul delivered it from the pit of corruption, and reſtored me to health again; it is thou alone, O Lord, that haſt preſerved my Life from deſtruction, thou haſt chaſtened and corrected me, but thou haſt not given me over unto death. O let this Life, which thou haſt thus graciouſly ſpared, be wholly conſecrated to thee. Behold, O Lord, I am by thy mercy made whole, O make me ſtrictly careful to ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto me. Lord, let not this reprieve thou haſt now given me, make me ſecure, as thinking that my Lord delayeth his coming, but grant me, I beſeech thee, to make a right uſe of this long-ſuffering of thine, and ſo to employ every minute of that time thou ſhalt allow me, that when thou ſhalt appear, I may have confidence, and not be aſhamed before thee at thy coming. Lord, I have found by this approach towards death, how dreadful a thing it is to be taken unprepared; O let it be a perpetual admonition to me to watch for my Maſter's coming. And when the pleaſures of ſin ſhall preſent themſelves to entice me, O make me to remember how bitter they will be at the laſt. O Lord, hear me, and as thou haſt in much mercy afforded me time, ſo grant me alſo grace to work out my own ſalvation, to provide Oyl in my Lamp, that when the Bridegroom cometh, I may go in with him to the Marriage. Grant this, I beſeech thee, for thy dear Son's ſake.

A Prayer at the approach of Death.

O Eternal and everliving God, who firſt breathedſt into Man the breath of Life, and when thou takeſt away that breath he dies and is turned again to his duſt, look with compaſſion on me thy poor creature who am now drawing near the gates of death, and, which is infinitely more terrible, the bar of Judgment. Lord, my own heart condemns me, and thou art infinitely greater than my heart, and knoweſt all things. The ſins I know and remember, fill me with horror; but there are alſo multitudes of others, which I either obſerved not at that time, or have ſince careleſly forgot, which are all preſent to thee. Thou ſetteſt my miſdeeds before thee, and my ſecret ſins in the light of thy countenance; and to what a mountainous heap muſt the minutely provocations of ſo many years ariſe? How long ſhall one ſo ungodly ſtand in thy Judgment, or ſuch a ſinner in the Congregation of the Righteous? And to add yet more to my terror, my very repentance, I fear, will not abide the tryal; my frequent relapſes heretofore have ſufficiently witneſſed the unſincerity of my paſt reſolutions. And then, O Lord, what can ſecure me that my preſent diſlikes of my ſins are not rather the effects of my amazing danger, than of any real change? And, O Lord, I know thou art not mocked, nor wilt accept of any thing that is not perfectly ſincere. O Lord, when I conſider this, fearfulneſs and trembling comes upon me, and an horrible dread overwhelmeth me; my fleſh trembleth for fear of thee, and my heart is wounded within me. But, O Lord, one deep calleth upon another, the depth of my Miſery upon the depth of thy Mercy; Lord, ſave now, or I periſh eternally. O thou who willeſt not that any ſhould periſh, but that all would come to repentance, bring me, I beſeech thee, though thus late, to a ſincere Repentance, ſuch as thou wilt accept, who trieſt the heart. Create in me, O God, a clean heart, and renew a right ſpirit within me. Lord, one day is with thee as a thouſand years. O let thy mighty ſpirit work in me now in this my laſt day, whatſoever thou ſeeſt wanting to fit me for thy mercy and acceptation. Give me a perfect and entire hatred of my ſins, and enable me to preſent thee with that ſacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, which thou haſt promiſed not to deſpiſe; that by this I may be made capable of that atonement, which thy dear Son hath by the more excellent oblation of himſelf made for all repenting ſinners. He is the propitiation for our ſins, he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was on him; O heal me by his ſtripes and let the cry of his blood drown the clamour of my ſins. I am indeed a child of wrath, but he is the Son of thy love; for his ſake ſpare me, O Lord, ſpare thy creature, whom he hath redeemed with his moſt precious blood, and be not angry with me for ever. In his wounds, O Lord, I take Sanctuary, O let not thy vengeance purſue me to this City of refuge: My Soul hangeth upon him, O let me not periſh with a *Jeſus*, with a Saviour in my arms. But by his Agony and bloody Sweat; by his Croſs and Paſſion, by all that he did and ſuffered for ſinners, good Lord deliver me; deliver me, I beſeech thee, from the wages of my ſins, thy wrath and everlaſting damnation, in this time of my tribulation, in the hour of death, and in the day of Judgment. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, and do not now repay my former neglects of thy calls, by refuſing to anſwer me in this time of my greateſt need. Lord, there is but a ſtep between me and death, O let not my ſun go down upon thy wrath, but ſeal my pardon before I go hence and be no more ſeen. Thy loving kindneſs is better than the life it ſelf, O let me have that in exchange, and I ſhall moſt gladly lay down this mortal Life. Lord, thou knoweſt all my deſire, and my groaning is not hid from thee; deal thou with me, O Lord, according to thy Name for ſweet is thy mercy: Take away the ſting of death, the guilt of my ſins, and then though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death I will fear no evil; I will lay me down in peace, and Lord, when I awake up, let me be ſatisfied with thy preſence in thy glory. Grant this, merciful God, for his ſake, who is both the Redeemer and Mediator of ſinners, even *Jeſus* Chriſt.

PSALMS.

PUt me not to rebuke, O Lord, in thine anger, neither chaſten me in thy heavy diſpleaſure.

There is no health in my fleſh becauſe of thy diſpleaſure, neither is there any reſt in my bones, by reaſon of my ſins.

For my wickedneſſes are gone over my head, and are a ſore burden too heavy for me to bear.

My wounds ſtink and are corrupt through my fooliſhneſs.

Therefore is my ſpirit vexed within me, and my heart within me is deſolate.

My ſins have taken ſuch hold upon me, that I am not able to look up: yea, they are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me.

But thou, O Lord God, art full of compaſſion and mercy, long-ſuffering, plenteous in goodneſs and truth.

Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me, for I am deſolate and in miſery.

If thou, Lord, ſhouldſt be extreme to mark what is done amiſs, O Lord, who may abide it?

O remember not the ſins and offences of my youth, but according to thy mercy think thou upon me for thy goodneſs.

Look upon my adverſity and miſery, and forgive me all my ſin.

Hide not thy face from thy ſervant, for I am in trouble, O haſte thee and hear me.

Out of the deep do I call unto thee, Lord, hear my voice.

Turn thee, O Lord, and deliver my Soul, O ſave me for thy mercy's ſake.

O go not from me, for trouble is hard at hand, and there is none to help.

I ſtretch forth my hands unto thee, my Soul gaſpeth unto thee as a thirſty land.

Draw nigh unto my Soul and ſave it; O deliver me, becauſe of my enemies.

For my Soul is full of trouble, and my life draweth nigh unto hell.

Save me from the Lions mouth, hear me from among the horns of the Unicorns.

O ſet me up upon the rock that is higher than I, for thou art my hope, and a ſtrong Tower for me againſt the enemy.

Why art thou ſo heavy, O my Soul, and why art thou ſo diſquieted within me?

Put thy Truſt in God, for I will yet give him thanks for the help of his countenance.

The Lord ſhall make good his loving kindneſs towards me, yea, thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever, deſpiſe not thou the work of thine own hands.

O *GOD, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee.*

My Soul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh alſo longeth after thee in a barren and dry land, where no water is.

Like as the Hart deſireth the water-brook, ſo longeth my Soul after thee, O God

My ſoul is a thirſt for God, even for the living God, when ſhall I come to appear before the preſence of God?

How amiable are thy dwellings, O Lord of Hoſts!

My Soul hath a deſire and longing to enter into the Courts of the Lord; my fleſh and my heart rejoyceth in the living God.

O that I had wings like a Dove! for then would I fly away and be at reſt.

O ſend out thy light and thy truth, that they may lead me, and bring me unto thy holy Hill, and to thy dwelling.

For one day in thy Courts is better than a thouſand.

I had rather be a door-keeper in the houſe of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedneſs.

I ſhould utterly have fainted, but that I believed verily to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living.

Thou art my helper and my redeemer, O Lord, make no long tarrying.

EJACULATIONS.

O LORD, of whom may I ſeek for ſuccour but of thee, who for my ſins art juſtly diſpleaſed? Yet, O Lord moſt Holy, O Lord moſt Mighty, O Holy and moſt merciful Saviour, deliver me not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

Thou knoweſt, Lord, the ſecrets of my heart, ſhut not up thy merciful eyes to my Prayer, but hear me, O Lord moſt Holy, O God moſt Mighty, O Holy and merciful Saviour, thou moſt worthy Judge eternal, ſuffer me not at my laſt hour for any pains of death to fall from thee.

Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven and before thee, and am not worthy to be called thy child; yet, O Lord, do not thou caſt off the bowels and compaſſions of a Father: But even as a Father pitieth his own children, ſo be thou merciful unto me.

Lord, the Prince of this world cometh, O let him have nothing in me, but as he accuſeth do thou abſolve; he lays many and grievous things to my charge, which he can too well prove; I have nothing to ſay for my ſelf, do thou anſwer for me, O Lord my God.

O Lord, I am clothed with filthy garments, and Satan ſtands at my right hand to reſiſt me; O be thou pleaſed to rebuke him, and pluck me as a brand out of the fire, cauſe mine iniquities to paſs from me, and clothe me with the righteouſneſs of thy Son.

Behold, O God, the Devil is coming towards me, having great wrath, becauſe he knoweth that he hath but a ſhort time. O ſave and deliver me, leſt he devour my Soul like a Lion, and tear it in pieces while there is none to help.

O my God, I know that no unclean thing can enter into thy Kingdom, and I am nothing but pollution, my very righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags: O waſh me, and make me white in the blood of the Lamb, that ſo I may be fit to ſtand before thy Throne.

Lord, the ſnares of death compaſs me round about, O let not the pains of hell alſo take hold upon me, but though I find trouble, and heavineſs, yet, O Lord, I beſeech thee deliver my Soul.

O dear *Jeſus*, who haſt bought me with the precious price of thine own blood: Challenge now thy purchace, and let not the malice of Hell pluck me out of thy hand.

O bleſſed High Prieſt, who art able to ſave them to the utmoſt, who come unto God by thee, ſave me, I beſeech thee, who have no hope but on thy merits and interceſſion.

O God, I confeſs I have defaced that image of thine thou didſt imprint upon my Soul; Yet, O thou faithful Creator, have pity upon thy creature.

O *Jeſu*, I have by my many and grievous ſins crucified thee afreſh, yet thou who prayedſt for thy perſecutors, intercede for me alſo, and ſuffer not, O my Redeemer, my Soul (the price of thy blood) to periſh.

O Spirit of Grace, I have by my horrid impieties done deſpite to thee; yet, O bleſſed Comforter, though I have often grieved thee, be thou pleaſed to ſuccour and relieve me, and ſay unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation.

Mine eyes look unto thee. O Lord in thee is my truſt, O caſt not out my Soul.

O Lord, in thee have I truſted, let me never be confounded.

O Bleſſed Lord, who ſcourgeſt every Son whom thou receiveſt, let me be weary of thy correction, but give me ſuch a perfect ſubjection to thee the Father of Spirits, that this chaſtiſement may be for my profit, that I may thereby be partaker of thy holineſs.

O Thou Captain of my Salvation, who wert made perfect by ſufferings, ſanctifie to me all the pains of Body, all the terrors of Mind, which thou ſhalt permit to fall upon me.

Lord, my ſins have deſerved eternal torments, make me chearfully and thankfully to bear my preſent pains, chaſten me as thou pleaſeſt here, that I may not be condemn'd with the world.

Lord, the waters are come in even unto my Soul, O let thy ſpirit move upon theſe waters, and make them like the pool of *Betheſda*, that they may cure whatſoever ſpiritual diſeaſe thou diſcerneſt in me.

O Chriſt, who firſt ſufferedſt many and grievous things, and then entredſt into thy glory, make me ſo to ſuffer with thee, that I may alſo be glorified with thee.

O dear *Jeſus*, who humbledſt thy ſelf to the death of the Croſs for me, let that death of thine ſweeten the bitterneſs of mine.

When thou hadſt overcome the ſharpneſs of death, thou didſt open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

I believe that thou ſhalt come to be my Judge.

I pray thee therefore help thy ſervant whom thou haſt redeemed with thy moſt precious blood.

Make me to be numbred with thy Saints in glory everlaſting.

Thou art the Reſurrection and the Life, he that believeth in thee, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live: Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.

My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better: Lord, I groan earneſtly, deſiring to be clothed upon with that Houſe from Heaven.

I deſire to put off this my Tabernacle. O be pleaſed to receive me into everlaſting habitations.

Bring my Soul out of Priſon, that I may give thanks unto thy name.

Lord, I am here to wreſtle, not only with fleſh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and ſpiritual wickedneſs. O take me from theſe tents of *Kedar*, into the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, where Satan ſhall be utterly trodden under my feet.

I cannot here attend one minute to thy ſervice without diſtraction, O take me up to ſtand before thy Throne, where I ſhall ſerve thee day and night.

I am here in heavineſs through many tribulations, O receive me into that place of reſt, where all tears ſhall be wiped from my eyes, where there ſhall be no more death, nor ſorrow, nor crying, nor pain.

I am here in the ſtate of baniſhment and abſence from the Lord. O take me where I ſhall for ever behold thy face, and follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth.

I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the Faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs.

O Bleſſed *Jeſu*, who haſt loved me, and waſhed me from my ſins in thine own blood, receive my Soul.

Into thy hands I commend my Spirit, for thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord thou God of truth. Come Lord *Jeſus*, come quickly.

PRAYERS *for their uſe, who Mourn in ſecret for the* PUBLICK CALAMITIES, *&c.*

PSALM 74.

O God wherefore art thou abſent from us ſo long: why is thy wrath ſo hot againſt the ſheep of thy paſture? &c.

Pſal. 79. *O God the Heathen are come into thine inheritance: Thy holy Temple have they defiled, and made* Jeruſalem *an heap of ſtones*, &c.

Pſal. 80. *Hear, O thou ſhepherd of* Iſrael: *Thou that leadeſt* Joſeph *like a ſheep: Shew thy ſelf alſo, thou that ſitteſt upon the Cherubims*, &c.

A Prayer to be uſed in theſe times of Calamity.

O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, I deſire humbly to confeſs before thee, both on my own behalf, and that of this Nation that theſe many years of calamity we have groaned under, are but the juſt, (yea mild) returns of thoſe many more years of our provocations againſt thee, and that thy preſent wrath is but the due puniſhment of thy abuſed mercy. O Lord, thou haſt formerly abounded to us in bleſſings above all the people of the Earth. Thy candle ſhined upon our heads, and we delighted our ſelves in thy great goodneſs; Peace was within our walls, and plenteouſneſs within our Palaces; there was no decay, no leading into Captivity, and no complaining in our ſtreets: But we turned this Grace into wantonneſs, we abuſed our Peace to Security, our Plenty to Riot and Luxury, and made thoſe good things which ſhould have endeared our hearts to thee, the occaſion of eſtranging them from thee. Nay, O Lord, thou gaveſt us yet more precious mercies, thou wert pleaſed thy ſelf to pitch thy Tabernacle with us, to eſtabliſh a pure and glorious Church among us, and give us thy word to be a Lamp unto our feet,and a light unto our paths: But, O Lord, we have made no other uſe of that light, than to conduct us to the Chambers of death; we have dealt proudly, and not hearkned to thy Commandments, and by rebelling againſt the light have purchaſed to our ſelves ſo much the heavier portion in the outer darkneſs. And now, O Lord, had the overflowings of thy vengeance been anſwerable to that of our ſin, we had long ſince been ſwept away with a ſwift deſtruction, and there had been none of us alive at this day to implore thy mercy. But thou art a gracious God, ſlow to anger, and haſt proceeded with us with much patience and long-ſuffering, thou haſt ſent thy Judgments to awaken us to repentance, and haſt alſo allowed us ſpace for it: But alas! we have perverted this mercy of thine beyond all the former, we return not to him that ſmiteth us, neither do we ſeek the Lord; we are ſlidden back by a perpetual back-ſliding no Man repenteth him of his wickedneſs, or ſaith, What have I done? 'Tis true indeed, we fear the rod, (we dread every ſuffering, ſo that we are ready to buy it off with the fouleſt ſin) but we fear not him that hath appointed it, but by a wretched obſtinacy harden our necks againſt thee, and refuſe to return. And no, O GOD, what balms is there in *Gilead* that can cure us, who when thou wouldſt heal us, will not be healed? We know thou haſt pronounced that there is no peace to the wicked, and how ſhall we then pray for peace, that ſtill retain our wickedneſs? This, this, O Lord, is our soreſt diſeaſe, O give us Medicines to heal this ſickneſs; heal our Souls and then we know thou canſt ſoon heal our Land. Lord, thou haſt long ſpoken by thy Word to our ears, by thy Judgments even to all our ſenſes, but unleſs thou ſpeak by thy Spirit to our hearts, all other calls will ſtill be ineffectual. O ſend out this voice, and that a mighty voice, ſuch as may awake us out of this Lethargy: Thou that didſt call *Lazarus* out of the grave, O be pleaſed to call us who are Dead, yea, putrified in treſpaſſes and ſins, and make us to awake to righteouſneſs. And though, O Lord, our frequent reſiſtances even of thoſe inward Calls, have juſtly provoked thee to give us up to the luſts of our own hearts; yet, O thou boundleſs Ocean of mercy, who art good not only beyond what we can deſerve, but what we can wiſh, do not withdraw the influence of thy grace, and take not thy holy Spirit from us. Thou wert found of thoſe that ſought thee not: O let that act of mercy be repeated to us who are ſo deſperately, yet ſo inſenſibly Sick, that we cannot ſo much as look after the Phyſician; and by how much our caſe is the more dangerous, ſo much the more ſovereign Remedies do thou apply. Lord, help us, and conſider not ſo much our unworthineſs of thy aid, as our irremediable ruine, if we want it; ſave Lord, or we periſh eternally. To this end diſpenſe to us in our temporal Intereſt what thou ſeeſt may beſt ſecure our ſpiritual; if a greater degree of outward miſery will tend to the curing our inward, Lord, ſpare not thy Rod, but ſtrike yet more ſharply. Caſt out this Devil, though with never ſo much foaming and tearing. But if thou ſeeſt that ſome return of mercy may be moſt likely to melt us, O be pleaſed ſo far to condeſcend to our wretchedneſs, as to afford us that, and, whether by thy ſharper or thy gentler methods, bring us home to thy ſelf. And then, O Lord, we know thy hand is not ſhortned, that it cannot ſave: When thou haſt delivered us from our ſins, thou canſt and wilt deliver us from our troubles. O ſhew us thy mercy, and grant us thy ſalvation, that being redeemed both in our Bodies and Spirits, we may glorifie thee in both in a chearful obedience, and praiſe the Name of our God, that hath dealt wonderfully with us through *Jeſus* Chriſt our Lord.

A Prayer for This Church.

O Thou great God of Recompences, who turneſt a fruitful Land into Barrenneſs for the wickedneſs of them that dwell therein; thou haſt moſt juſtly executed that Fatal Sentence on This Church, which having once been the perfection of Beauty, the joy of the whole Earth, is now become a ſcorn and deriſion to all that are round about her. O Lord, what could have been done to thy Vineyard that thou haſt not done in it? And ſince it hath brought forth nothing but wild grapes, it is perfectly juſt with thee to take away the hedge thereof, and let it be eaten up. But, O Lord, though our iniquities teſtifie againſt us, yet do thou it for thy Name's ſake; for our backſlidings are many, we have ſinned againſt thee. O the hope of *Iſrael*, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why ſhouldeſt thou be as a ſtranger in the Land, as a way-faring Man that turneth aſide to tarry for a night? Why ſhouldeſt thou be as a Man aſtonied? as a mighty man that cannot ſave? Yet thou, O Lord, art in the midſt of us, and we are called by thy Name, leave us not; deprive us of what outward enjoyment thou pleaſeſt, take from us the opportunities of our luxury, and it may be a mercy; but O take not from us the means of our Reformation, for that is the moſt direful expreſſion of thy wrath. And though we have hated the Light, becauſe our deeds were evil, yet, O Lord, do not by withdrawing it condemn us to walk on ſtill in darkneſs, but let it continue to ſhine till it have guided our feet into the way of peace. O Lord, ariſe, ſtir up thy ſtrength and come and help, and deliver not the Soul of thy Turtle Dove [*This diſconſolate Church*] unto the multitude of the Enemy, but help her, O God, and that right early. But if, O Lord, our rebellions have ſo provoked thee, that the *Ark muſt wander in the Wilderneſs till all this murmuring Generation be conſumed*, yet let not that periſh with us, but bring it at laſt into a *Canaan*, and *let our more innocent Poſterity ſee that which in thy juſt judgment thou denieſt to us.* In the mean time let us not ceaſe to bewail that deſolation our ſins have wrought, to think upon the ſtones of *Sion*, and pity to ſee her in the duſt, nor ever be aſhamed or afraid to own her in her loweſt and moſt perſecuted Condition, but eſteem the Reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the Treaſures of *Egypt*, and ſo approve our conſtancy to this our afflicted Mother, that her Bleſſed Lord and head may own us with mercy when he ſhall come in the glory of thee his Father with the holy Angels. Grant this, merciful Lord, for the ſame *Jeſus* Chriſt his ſake.

A Prayer for the Peace of the Church.

LORD *Jeſus* Chriſt, which of thine Almightineſs madeſt all creatures both viſible and inviſible, which of thy Godly Wiſdom governeſt and ſetteſt all things in moſt goodly order, which of thine unſpeakable goodneſs keepeſt, defendeſt and furthereſt all things, which of thy deep mercy reſtoreſt the decayed, reneweſt the fallen, raiſeſt the dead; vouchſafe, we pray thee, at laſt, to caſt down thy countenance upon thy well-beloved Spouſe the Church, but let it be that amiable and merciful countenance wherewith thou pacifieſt all things in Heaven, in Earth, and whatſoever is above Heaven and under the Earth: vouchſafe to caſt upon us thoſe tender and pitiful eyes with which thou didſt once behold *Peter* that great Shepherd of thy Church, and forthwith he remembred himſelf and repented; with which eyes thou once didſt view the ſcattered Multitude, and wert moved with compaſſion, that for lack of a good Shepherd they wandred as ſheep diſperſed and ſtrayed aſunder. Thou ſeeſt (O good Shepherd) what ſundry ſorts of Wolves have broken into thy ſheep-coats; ſo that if it were poſſible the very perfect perſon ſhould be brought into error: Thou ſeeſt with what Winds, with what Waves, with what Storms thy ſilly Ship is toſſed, thy Ship wherein thy little flock is in peril to be drowned. And what is now left but that it utterly ſink and we all periſh? Of this tempeſt and ſtorm we may thank our own wickedneſs and ſinful living, we diſcern it well and confeſs it; we diſcern thy Righteouſneſs, and we bewail our unrighteouſneſs: But we appeal to thy mercy which ſurmounteth all thy works; we have now ſuffered much puniſhment, being ſcourged with ſo many Wars, conſumed with ſuch Loſſes of Goods, ſhaken with ſo many Floods, and yet appears there no where any Haven or Port unto us, being thus tired and forlorn among ſo ſtrange evils; but ſtill every day more grievous puniſhments and more ſeem to hang over our heads; we complain not of thy ſharpneſs, moſt tender Saviour, but we diſcern here alſo thy mercy, foraſmuch as much grievouſer plagues we have deſerved. But O moſt merciful *Jeſus*, we beſeech thee that thou wilt not conſider nor weigh what is due for our deſervings, but rather what becometh thy mercy, without which neither the Angels in Heaven can ſtand ſure before thee, much leſs we ſilly veſſels of clay. Have mercy on us, O Redeemer, which art eaſie to be intreated, not that we be worthy of thy mercy, but give thou this glory unto thy own Name. Suffer not thoſe which either have not known thee, or do envy thy glory, continually to triumph over us, and ſay, Where is their God, where is their Redeemer, where is their Saviour, where is their Bridegroom, that they thus boaſt on? Theſe opprobrious words redound unto thee, O Lord, while by our evils men weigh and eſteem thy Goodneſs: They think we be forſaken, whom they ſee not amended. Once when thou ſlepſt in the ſhip, and a Tempeſt ſuddenly ariſing threatned death to all in the ſhip, thou awokeſt at the out-cry of a few Diſciples, and ſtraightway at thine Almighty Word the Waters couched, the Winds fell, the Storm was ſuddenly turned into a great calm; the dum Waters knew their Makers voice. Now in this far greater Tempeſt, wherein not a few mens Bodies be in danger, but innumerable Souls, we beſeech thee at the cry of thy Holy Church which is in danger of drowning, that thou wilt awake. So many thouſands of Men do cry, *Lord, ſave us, we periſh*, the Tempeſt is paſt Man's power; it is thy Word that muſt do the deed. Lord *Jeſu*, only ſay thou with a word of thy mouth, *Ceaſe, O Tempeſt, and forthwith ſhall the deſired calm appear.* Thou wouldſt have ſpared ſo many thouſands of moſt wicked men, if in the City of *Sodom* had been found but ten good Men. Now here be ſo many thouſands of Men which love the glory of thy Name, which ſigh for the beauty of thy Houſe, and wilt thou not at theſe Mens Prayers let go thine Anger, and remember thine accuſtomed and old mercies? Shalt thou not with thy heavenly policy turn our folly into thy glory? Shalt thou not turn the wicked mens evils into thy Church's good? For thy Mercy is wont then moſt of all to ſuccour, when the thing is with us paſt Remedy, and neither the might nor wiſdom of Men can help it. Thou alone bringeſt things that be never ſo out of order into order again, which art the only author and maintainer of Peace. Thou framedſt that old Confuſion wherein without order, without faſhion, confuſedly lay the diſcordant ſeeds of things, and with a wonderful order the things of that nature fought together, thou didſt allay and knit in a perpetual band. But how much greater Confuſion is this, where is no Charity, no Fidelity, no bonds of Love, no reverence neither of Laws nor yet of Rulers, no agreement of Opinions, but as it were in a miſordered Quire, every Man ſingeth a contrary Note! Among the heavenly Planets is no diſſention, the Elements keep their place, every one do the office whereunto they be appointed: And wilt thou ſuffer thy Spouſe, for whoſe ſake all things were made, thus by continual diſcords to periſh? Shalt thou ſuffer the wicked Spirits, which be authors and workers of diſcord, to bear ſuch a ſwing in thy Kingdom uncheck'd? Shalt thou ſuffer the ſtrong Captain of miſchief, whom thou once overthreweſt, again to invade thy Tents, and to ſpoil thy Souldiers? When thou wert here a Man converſant among Men, at thy Voice fled the Devils. Send forth, we beſeech thee, O Lord, thy Spirit, which may drive away out of the breaſts of all them that profeſs thy Name, the wicked Spirits, Maſters of riot, of covetouſneſs, of vain-glory, of carnal luſt, of miſchief and diſcord. *Create in us, O our God and King, a clean heart, and renew thy holy Spirit in our breaſts, pluck not from us thy holy Ghoſt. Render unto us the joy of thy ſaving health, and with thy principal Spirit, ſtrengthen thy Spouſe and the Herdmen thereof.* By this Spirit thou reconciledſt the Earthly to the Heavenly: By this thou didſt frame and reduce ſo many Tongues, ſo many Nations, ſo many ſundry ſorts of Men into one body of a Church, which body by the ſame Spirit is knit to thee their Head. This Spirit if thou wilt vouchſafe to renew in all mens hearts, then ſhall all theſe foreign miſeries ceaſe, or if they ceaſe not, they ſhall turn to the profit and avail of them which love thee. Stay this Confuſion, ſet in order this horrible Chaos (O Lord *Jeſus*) let thy Spirit ſtretch out it ſelf upon theſe waters of evil wavering Opinions. And becauſe thy Spirit, which according to thy Prophet's ſaying, *containeth all things*, hath alſo the Science of ſpeaking; make, that like as unto all them which be of thy Houſe is one Light, one Baptiſm, one God, one Hope, one Spirit, ſo they may alſo have one Voice, one Note, one Song, profeſſing one Catholick Truth. When thou didſt mount up to Heaven triumphantly, thou threweſt out from above thy precious things, thou gaveſt gifts among men, thou dealteſt ſundry rewards of thy Spirit. Renew again from above thy old bountifulneſs, give that thing to thy Church, now fainting and growing downward, that thou gaveſt unto her ſhooting up, at her firſt beginning. Give unto Princes and Rulers the grace ſo to ſtand in awe of thee, that they may ſo guide the Common-weal, as they ſhould ſhortly render account unto thee that art the King of Kings. Give Wiſdom to be always aſſiſtant unto them, that whatſoever is beſt to be done, they may eſpie it in their minds; and purſue the ſame in their doings. Give to the Biſhops the gift of Prophecy, that they may declare and interpret holy Scripture, not of their own brain, but of thine inſpiring. Give them the threefold Charity which thou once demandedſt of *Peter*, what time thou didſt betake unto him the charge of thy ſheep. Give to the Prieſt the love of Soberneſs and of Chaſtity. Give to thy people a good will to follow thy Commandments, and a readineſs to obey ſuch perſons as thou haſt appointed over them. So ſhall it come to paſs, if through thy gift thy Princes ſhall command that thou requireſt, if thy Paſtors and Herdmen ſhall teach the ſame, and thy people obey them both, that the old dignity and tranquility of the Church ſhall return again with a goodly order unto the glory of thy Name. Thou ſparedſt the *Ninevites* appointed to be deſtroyed, as ſoon as they converted to repentance, and wilt thou deſpiſe thy houſe falling down at thy feet, which inſtead of Sackcloath hath ſighs, and inſtead of aſhes, tears; Thou promiſeſt forgiveneſs to ſuch as turn unto thee, but this ſelf thing is thy Gift, a man to turn with his whole heart unto thee, to the intent all our goodneſs ſhould redound unto thy glory. Thou art the Maker, repair the work that thou haſt faſhioned. Thou art the Redeemer, ſave that thou haſt bought. Thou art the Saviour, ſuffer not them to periſh which do hang on thee. Thou art the Lord and owner, challenge thy Poſſeſſion. Thou art the Head, help thy Members, Thou art the King, give us a reverence of thy Laws. Thou art the Prince of Peace, breathe upon us brotherly love. Thou art the God, have pity on thy humble beſeechers, be thou, according to *Paul*'s ſaying, all things in all men, to the intent the whole Choire of thy Church with agreeing minds and conſonant voices for Mercy obtained at thy hands, may give thanks unto the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt; which after the moſt perfect example of Concord be diſtinguiſhed in property of Perſons and one in Nature: To whom be praiſe and glory Eternally. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the Queens Majeſty, out of the *Liber Regalis.*

GOD, *the unſpeakable Author of the World, Creator of Men, Governour of Empires, and eſtabliſher of all Kingdoms, who out of the loins of our Father* Abraham *didſt chuſe a King that became the Saviour of all Kings and Nations of the Earth; Bleſs, we beſeech thee, thy faithful Servant, and our dread Soveraign Lady, Queen* ANN, *with the richeſt bleſſings of thy Grace. Eſtabliſh her in the Throne of her Kingdom by thy mighty aid and protection; Viſit her as thou didſt viſit* Moſes *in the Buſh,* Joſhua *in the Battel,* Gideon *in the Field, and* Samuel *in the Temple. Let the Dew of thine abundant mercies fall upon her head, and give her the bleſſing of* David *and* Solomon. *Be unto her an Helmet of Salvation againſt the face of her Enemies, and a ſtrong Tower of defence in the time of adverſity. Let her Reign be proſperous, and her days many. Let peace, and love, and holineſs, let juſtice, and truth, and all Chriſtian Vertues flouriſh in her time. Let her people ſerve her with honour and obedience: And let her ſo duly ſerve thee here on Earth, that ſhe may hereafter everlaſtingly reign with thee in Heaven, through* Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord.* Amen.

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FINIS.

THE
CAUSES
OF THE
Decay of Chriſtian Piety.

OR, AN

IMPARTIAL SURVEY
Of the Ruines of
Chriſtian Religion,
UNDERMIN'D BY
UNCHRISTIAN PRACTICE.

Written by the Author of

THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.

LONDON,
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THE

PREFACE.

The time of writing this Treatiſe.

1. THough this be the firſt appearance this Tract has made in the world, yet its being is of ſomewhat a more ancient date; it having received its lineaments and perfect form ſome years ſince: When the Author, not having partiality enough to think it worthy publick view, had judged it, if not to perpetual darkneſs, yet at leaſt, to a long indefinite ſuſpenſion from ſeeing light. In this interval, it is more than probable ſome paſſages may have loſt much of their propriety to the preſent ſtate of affairs, they having been adapted to circumſtances which may ſince have received ſome change: And herein I muſt beſpeak the Redears candour, to make ſuch allowances as the matter ſhall require; of which yet I ſuppoſe there will not occur very many, or very important occaſions.

The occaſion of publiſhing it.

2. But would God I were to Apologize for a yet far greater abſurdity, that our ſcene were ſo ſhifted, that the whole deſign of the enſuing diſcourſe might become one entire impertinence, and that our more eminent conformity to the rules of our Chriſtian inſtitution, might ſuperſede theſe diſquiſitions about our failances and aberrations. But alas, I find I have pitcht upon a ſubject not like to be outdated; vice daily gaining not only ſtrength but impudence: Nay, we are not only become witneſſes againſt our ſelves, by declaring our Sin as Sodom, but we have forced God alſo to atteſt againſt us, by puniſhing us in a manner no leſs conſpicuous and manifeſt. And ſurely then 'tis more than time for us to take the Prophet's advice, Hag. 1. 7. to conſider our ways, to reflect not only on thoſe robuſt Gyant-like provocations which have thus bid defiance to Heaven; but alſo to ſift out thoſe ſecret Incendiaries that have inflamed us to this mad daring; to examine what that חמר, that inflamable bitumen, the untemper'd Morter is, with which we build our Babel, by diſcovering thoſe miſ-perſwaſions and falſe confidences, wherein many of our other Guilts are founded: In order to which this ſlight Tract offers its feeble, yet well-meant aids; being forced out of its retirement, and like Crœſus his dumb Son, compell'd to ſpeak by impulſe of the preſent exigent: And how deſpicable ſoever the Mite contributed be of it ſelf, yet if it may provoke the more wealthy to caſt in richer Gifts, it may prove no unprofitable agent for the Corban. 'Tis evident, this is a ſeaſon which not only warrants, but exacts the moſt importunate endeavours of perſwading men to thoſe things that belong to their Peace.

Sins of this Age aggravated from the

3. For although 'tis true, that every ſtate of ſin ſets us alſo in a ſtate of hoſtility with God, yet our preſent condition ſeems to have advanc'd us beyond the common degrees even of that. 'Tis, we know, high inſolence againſt a Prince to deſpiſe and violate his Laws, but when to that are ſuper-added contumelies, and deſigned affronts to his perſon, this is ſuch an accumulated outrage, as will vanquiſh the moſt reſolved patience. And this alas, appears to be our caſe: We have long indulged to our ſelves the breach of all Divine Laws, gratified every appetite, every paſſion and luſt with the forfeiture of our Allegiance, and as if this would not ſerve to render us irreconcileable enough to God, we are now grown to ſubjoyn malice to lienciouſneſs; project not ſo much to pleaſe our ſelves, as to diſpleaſe Him;

profeſs a contempt not only of his Commands, but himſelf; and ſeek no leſs to dethrone Him, than abrogate thoſe. Thus have we made it a kind of perſonal quarrel, and by thoſe impious blaſphemies we daily dart againſt Heaven, do, as it were, dare the Divine Majeſty to vindicate it ſelf. Whether his great longanimity may have given our Hectors *a fancy, that they had vapoured God (as they are uſed to do men) into a tameneſs, I ſhall not examine: But his late proceedings with us ſufficiently teſtifie that he means no longer to decline our challenge. He now appears to avow the enmity as openly as we have done; and has already given us competent eſſays, how* fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God, *Heb.* 10. 31.

greatneſs of our judgments.

4. *'Tis true indeed, that he has formerly owned his controverſie with our Land, and by a long ſeries of great and heavy calamities atteſted himſelf the* God to whom vengeance belongeth, Pſal. 94. 1. *Yet as great Monarchs uſe to quell leſſer inſurrections by their Lieutenants, and ſubordinate Officers, but when the rebellion grows high and deſperate, then to encounter it in their own perſons; ſo is it here obſervable that God then chaſtiſed, and tried to reduce us by inferiour Inſtruments, found us out* Lictors *among our ſelves, and made one man's ſin the puniſhment of anothers: But now, as if he had the ſame jealouſie for his honour which* Joab *had at the ſiege of* Rabba *for* David's, 2 Sam. 12. 28. *as if he feared to be rivaled in the glory of our ruin, he takes us in his own hand, marks us out, as he did* Pharaoh, *to be the Trophies of his own peculiar vengeance, appearing ſignally againſt us in all the dreadful ſolemnities of an enraged enemy.*

Particular inſtances thereof, firſt of the Plague;

5. *For firſt, has he not as* Moſes *ſpeaks,* Deut. 32. 41. *whet his glittering* Sword? *Nay, has he not moreover (in the Scripture ſtile) made it drunk with blood? by ſweeping away multitudes of us in a raging PESTILENCE, which Marcht from one part of the Nation to another in a kind of Triumphant progreſs, as if it had received the ſame mandate God gave* Abraham, Gen. 13. 17. Ariſe, walk through the land, in the length thereof, and in the breadth thereof, for unto thee will I give it. *Whether it may not thus fatally compleat its courſe, notwithſtanding the halt it ſeems to make, and paſs from our* Dan *to our* Beerſheba, *is a queſtion that can with no probability be reſolved in the negative; for as it is not to be doubted but there were in* Judea *as great ſinners as thoſe on whom the Tower of* Siloam *fell,* Luke 13. *that thoſe who have hitherto eſcaped have an equal ſhare in the provoking cauſe of the Judgment: So alſo that great* unſenſibleneſs *many of us ſhew of what others groan under, is a very ominous abode, it being not only a dangerous ſymptom, but a probable means of drawing that calamity to our ſelves. When God ſees we will ſuffer nothing by way of conſent and ſympathy with others, 'tis but equal we have our part in a more direct and immediate infliction, and feel what we would not compaſſionate.* Thucydides *mentions it as the effect of the great Plague at* Athens, *that it had extinguiſht humanity; brought in a kind of ferity and barbarouſneſs among them, rendring them openly villanous to man, and blaſphemous againſt God;* θεῶν φόβος ἢ ἀνθρώπων νόμος οὐδεὶς ἀπεῖργε *there was no reſtraint of Law or Religion, one part being deſperate upon proſpect of their danger, the other preſumptuous upon the contemplation of their Eſcape; and ſurely if we look impartially, ours will appear to have had ſomewhat of the ſame operation. Thoſe compaſſions which the novelty it ſeems at firſt gave us to ſufferers in this kind, ſeems now quite extinct; ſo unconcerned are we grown in every thing that touches us not in our individuals as if we owned no relation to the Species of mankind, though backt alſo with that cloſer tye, which the ſpiritual conſanguinity has ſuperſeded. A pregnant indication of this may, I doubt not, be collected (as from many other circumſtances, ſo particularly (from the great haſte has in many places been made, to lay aſide thoſe publick* Humiliations *and Interceſſions which were recommended to us, as well by the command of Authority,*

Authority, as the common diſtreſs; but have been caſt off without the ſubſtraction of either of thoſe motives. Whether we are duly mindful of the afflictions of Joſeph, *that cannot afford one day in a month for a ſolemn reflection on them, I muſt leave to every mans conſcience to diſcuſs. But ſure we are no leſs wanting to our ſelves than them in this neglect; the office being no leſs deſigned for Antidote than cure, to prevent the judgment where it is not, than to remove it where it is: And if we will neither deprecate on our own behalfs, nor interceed on others; we are ſure as improvident, as uncharitable, and may juſtly expect the fatal event of both.*

Secondly on the fire.

6. *In the interim, although the preſent reſpite from deſtruction, and our own deceitful hearts flatter us, and ſay Peace, Peace; we have all reaſon to conclude that God is not atoned, the quarrel and hoſtility goes on, and his* hand is ſtretched out ſtill, Eſ. 5. 25. *And ſo indeed we find it in other diſmal events. Slaughter we know is not the only effect of War; which as it deſtroys the lives of many, blaſts the Supports and Joys of more. This conſequence of hoſtility we find well expreſt by the Prophet,* Joel 2. 3. The Land is as the Garden of *Eden* before them and behind them a deſolate wilderneſs, *and herein alſo hath the Lord of Hoſts, the great God of battel ſhewed himſelf mighty againſt us, he has invaded us not only with Sword, but FIRE: And in ſo ſtupendous a manner deſolated the glory of our Land, that no humane fury could have procured, or even have wiſht the like vaſtation and ruins.* That City which was great among the Nations, and Princeſs among the Provinces, *Lam.* 1. 1. lies buried in her own Aſhes, *and is both Funeral-pile and Urn to her ſelf; and what neither foreign nor domeſtick enemies could in a ſucceſſion of many ages effect, one blaſt of the breath of his diſpleaſure,* Pſal. 18. *has performed in a moment. So verifying even in a literal ſence the Apoſtle's affirmation,* Heb. 12. 29. that our God is a conſuming fire. Plutarch *tells us when* Fabius *ſackt* Tarentum, he *took not away their Images, but ſaid,* ἀπολείπομεν τοὺς θεοὺς Ταραντίνοις κεχολωμένους, Let *us leave the Tarentines* their Gods that are offended with them. *'Tis our Calamity to be ſignally under the indignation of our incenſed God, which in that great Captains judgment was ſomewhat more dreadful than the worſt afflictions of War: For what induſtry ſoever has been uſed to entitle either the negligence or deſigns of men unto our overthrow, yet ſure never any judgment had more legible marks of God's immediate hand: Such as ſhew he meant to revenge the abuſe of his former gentle methods: That thoſe who would not be reformed by the ſlighter corrections wherein he dallied with them, might find* a judgment worthy of God, Wiſd. 12. 26. *And ſure ſuch was this, which both for its greatneſs and irreſiſtibleneſs does well own its Author, and ſhews his wrath was accended to a very exceſſive heat, that thus poured out itſelf not only like, but in Fire,* Lam. 2. 4.

The burning down of our Churches:

7. *I ſhall not here aſſume the Politicians part, and weigh the detriment we have ſuſtained by it in our civil intereſt, of which perhaps nothing but time and experience can give us a full eſtimate; It rather ſuits my deſign to obſerve what relates to our ſpiritual concerns, whilſt* God's dwelling-places *were involved in the ſame ruine with ours; his own peculiar portion not exempted, but as the Prophet complains,* Eſ. 64. 11. Our holy and beautiful houſes where our Fathers praiſed him are burnt with fire: *This, though perhaps leaſt conſidered, is ſure not the leaſt ſad circumſtance, had only the ſcenes of our luxury, or our fraud, been deſtroyed, it might have ſent us with more fervency to the places of our devotion, and we might have frequented God's houſes the better, for being deſtitute of our own; but when theſe alſo are made parts of the common heap, 'tis a ſad teſtimonial that our very Religion was provoking; That that pageant-like piety which we depoſited in our CHURCHES, only to make a ſhew with on* Holy-days, *ſerved only to defile thoſe holy places, and render them ſo polluted, as required no*

ſlighter purgation than that of FIRE. *'Tis, we know, not long, ſince thoſe manſions ſacred to the Prince of Peace, where even in the vulgar obvious ſenſe, made Magazines for War ; but yet more ſo in reference to that Pulpit-wild-fire, which ſet the Nation in combuſtion ; whether that ſtrange Fire, which ſome of our* Nadab's *and* Abihu's *introduc'd there, may not (even at this diſtance) have done its part to the drawing down this* FIRE *from Heaven, I leave to their ſerious reflection. But neither the* Hypocrite *nor the* Seditious *muſt ingroſs the guilt of this ruin : The* Atheiſt *vyes with both ; for alas, what ſhould God do with Temples among thoſe, who pay him no worſhip ? Or why ſhould he let thoſe ſacred monuments remain among them, to whom all memorials of him ſerve but as occaſions, and incentives to blaſpheme him ? They have long ſaid with thoſe in* Job, Depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways ; *now 'tis but equitatable (I had almoſt ſaid* Civil *) to take them at their word, and no longer reſide among thoſe who avowedly diſclaim him.*

God's withdrawing his gracious Preſence from us, which is oft follow-ed by

8. *And this, 'tis much to be feared, may be the portent of this diſmal vaſtation : We know men uſe not to deface thoſe houſes, where they intend to inhabit : And ſure* this abhorring his Sanctuary, *and* caſting off his Altar, Lam. 2. *is a dreadful ſign, that he means no longer to continue his reſidence among us; indeed we find in Scripture that his promiſe of cohabiting is always limited to thoſe who own themſelves his people, and therefore when ſo many of us have openly renounc'd that relation, we can with no juſtice expect the bleſſing appendant to it.*

Temporal calamities, and

9. *But perhaps this will ſeem to ſuch no formidable thing; God's ſo withdrawing of himſelf is but agreeable to their wies, a kind of quitting the field to them, and ſo rather matter of complacency than regret : But 'tis to be conſidered, that there is another preſence of God that will infallibly ſucceed this ; when he removes that of his Grace, 'tis to make way for that of his Anger ; like the* Philiſtins, *we ſhall know the God of* Iſrael *is among us by his Plagues,* 1 Sam. 5. *or to make a yet more more dreadful compariſon, we ſhall, like the damned in Hell, diſcern his preſence only in the punitive effects of it, and read his nearneſs in our ſufferings. And ſure this will be but an ill exchange, even to the profaneſt of us ; thoſe that have moſt deſpiſed or loathed the ſoft breathings of his Word and Spirit, will find it yet harder to endure the whirlwinds of his wrath, which will ſnatch from us thoſe ſecular advantages, for whoſe purſuit we have neglected* the better part, Luke 10. 42. *and leave us as little of worldly enjoyments, as we deſired to have of ſpiritual.*

10. *Of this our late Calamities have given us a ſad* Præludium, *and God knows how ſoon we may ſee the laſt ſcene of the fatal Tragedy, it being too probable that this is God's laſt Experiment upon us, like the Cauſticks and Scarrifyings to a Lethargick Patient ; if this bring us not to ſenſe, we are like to ſleep on to deſtruction : And alas, what uncomfortable ſymptomes appear even in this point alſo! Who is there that (unleſs awakened by his perſonal concernments) ſeems at all to ſtartle at the noiſe of publick ruin ? When God in diſpleaſure threatned the* Iſraelites *that he would remit their conduct to his* Angel, *and not go himſelf with them. The Text ſays,* They mourned, and no man put on his ornaments on him, *Exod.* 33. 4. *or as the* LXX, κατεπένθησαν ἐν πενθικοῖς *and the Syraick,* ܫܡܛܘ ܟܠ ܐܢܫ ܙܝܢܗ ܥܠܘܗܝ] They ſtript themſelves of their Armour, their ruffling garb of War, and appeared in the penitential dreſs of ſackcloath and aſhes : *But now we are given up not to a conducting, but deſtroying Angel, what ſigns of remorſe do we ſhew ? What vanity (I fear I may ask what vice) have we ſubſtracted, upon the ſenſe of God's anger ? What nicety in Cloaths or Diet have we cut off, in ſympathy with the nakedneſs and hunger of our afflicted Brethren ? Nay, do not the unreaſonable* Jollities *of too many among us, look as if we triumpht in their miſeries, found Muſick in the diſcordant ſounds of their*

groans, and our own laughter; and emulated that infamous barbarity of Nero, *who played while* Rome *burned? 'Tis mentioned by the Prophet as a moſt prepoſterous thing, a kind of impious Soleciſm to revel under the menace of judgments.* Thus ſaith the Lord, a Sword, a Sword, it is ſharpned to make a ſore ſlaughter, it is furbiſhed that it may glitter, *ſhould we then make mirth?* Ezek. 21. 9, 10. *and certainly it leſs befits us againſt whom God has not only prepared, but uſed his Sword; who are not only under the threats, but actual Execution of his vengeance: And what is it but interpretatively to prompt him to yet ſharper inflictions, by ſhewing him that theſe have not edge enough to penetrate us? With how much indignation God reſents this perverſe, this contumelious behaviour, we may read,* Eſay 22. 12, 13, 14. In that day did the Lord call to weeping, and mourning, and to baldneſs, and to girding with ſackcloth, and behold joy and gladneſs, ſlaying Oxen, and killing Sheep, eating Fleſh, and drinking Wine; eating and drinking, for to morrow we ſhall die: *Upon which follows that ſevere denunciation:* Surely this iniquity ſhall not be purged from you till you dye. *Of ſo deep a tincture is this guilt, that 'tis as laſting as our lives, and like the fretting* leproſie *in the houſe,* Levit. 14. 45. *can be removed by nothing but its diſſolution.*

The Concluſion, an Admonition to Repentance.

11. *O then let us not add this to the heap of our other provocations, miſtake impudence or deſperation for courage; and frantickly defie that Omnipotence which we are ſure we cannot reſiſt: But ſince it has pleaſed God even in wrath to remember mercy, let us tranſcribe his Copy, be as kind to our ſelves as he has been to us, and ſtop in our career as he has done in his; not ſo madly affect a full parallel with* Sodom *and* Gomorrha, *as to force him to deſtroy that remnant,* Eſ. 1. 9. *which alone diſtinguiſhes our caſe: But rather take pattern from* Nineveh; *cry, and* cry mightily to God, *joyn humiliation to our prayers, and reformation to both. And could we be perſwaded to do this with the ſame ſincerity, and univerſality, we might hope it may be with the ſame ſucceſs alſo: Would every one who has contributed to the accending, as induſtriouſly contribute to the appeaſing of God's wrath: would all who have brought their fire-brands, bring alſo their tears to quench them; as there would be no dry Eyes in the* Nation *at the preſent, ſo might it prevent as great a Generality of weeping ones for the future; ſecure us ſuch a tranquility here, as may calmly convoy us to that impaſſible ſtate,* where all tears ſhall be wiped from our eyes, where there ſhall be no more death, nor ſorrow, nor crying, nor pain, *Rev.* 21. 4.

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THE

THE CAUSES OF THE Decay of Chriſtian Piety.

CHAP. I.

The Character of Chriſtian Religion, demonſtrating its aptitude to plant exemplary Vertue and Sanctity.

Chriſtian Piety ought to improve in proportion to the time of its growth.

1. THE holy *Pſalmiſt* gives it as part of the Character of Pious perſons, and there-withal a deſcription of their felicity, *Pſal.* 92. 13. *That they ſhall bring forth more fruit in their Age*: And what he thus obſerves of the members disjunctively and apart, reaſon ſuggeſts to be in a higher and more eminent manner appliable to the whole body united: And it being as well the mark as duty of every ſingle Chriſtian *to grow in Grace*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. We may by rules of Proportion conclude, that the Collective maſs of ſuch, the whole Church is by this time near *attained to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*, *Eph.* 4. 3. And indeed this is ſo regular an inference that while the Premiſſes ſtand firm, 'tis impoſſible to ſhake the Concluſion, the entire Body muſt neceſſarily augment anſwerably to the growth of its ſeveral parts. And if we ſhould ſo far let looſe to ſpeculation, as to forget our experience, if we meaſure the effect only by the power and energy of the cauſe, we ſhould ſurely be as far from doubting the Premiſſes alſo. Chriſtianity is in itſelf of ſo prolifick a nature, ſo apt to impregnate the hearts and lives of its Proſelytes, that it is hard to imagine, that any branch ſhould want a due fertility that is engrafted into ſo vigorous a ſtock.

Advantag'd by its divine original.

2. For firſt, in its ſpring and original it is moſt ſupernatural and divine, derived immediately from him, who had nothing more of Man than he purpoſely aſſumed to draw us the nearer to him as God. He it was that diſſeminated this Doctrine, and that in order to the *purifying to himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works*; and certainly his choice abundantly juſtifies its propriety to that end, and his deſcent from Heaven on that errand puts ſo venerable a ſolemnity upon it, that though his deſcent were very aſtoniſhing, yet it will be much more ſo, that it ſhould fail of the deſigned effect.

By its excellent Precepts.

3. And indeed did our Faith give us no Clue to lead us to the Author, yet its compoſition would ſpeak it to be of no humane extraction, its precepts are ſo excellent and refined, ſo agreeable to the more ſpiritual part of our temper, and ſo apt, as to foreſtal, ſo to cleanſe and ſublimate the more groſs and corrupt, as ſhews fleſh and blood never revealed it. Nay farther, ſo effectually providing for all thoſe advantages to mankind, which the wiſeſt of mens Laws have in vain attempted, that methinks they all ſtand before it like the *Magicians* before *Moſes*, and by their impotence ta-

citly confeſs it to be the finger of God. 'Twere too large a Theme to confront them in the ſeveral inſtances, let it ſuffice to obſerve one which has a common influence on all; and that is the immaculate *cleanneſs* of heart, which Chriſt's, and only Chriſt's law requires. This is the only proper *baſis* on which to ſuperſtruct, firſt *innocency*, and then *vertue*, and without this the moſt rigid exacters of outward purity, do but tranſcribe the folly of him, who pumps very laboriouſly in a Ship, yet neglects to ſtop the Leak: Or the worſe tyranny of *Pharaoh*, in *requiring Brick without Straw*: So far is it from a ſeverity in our Law-giver, thus to limit and reſtrain our thoughts, that it is an act of the greateſt indulgence: By no means the laying on a new burden, but the furniſhing us with an Engine to bear with eaſe that weight, which otherwiſe the ſtouteſt *Atlas* muſt ſink under. And were but this one precept ſincerely conformed to, it would not only facilitate but aſcertain the obedience to all the reſt. If the *firſt ſparks* of ill were quencht within, what poſſibility is there they ſhould ever break out into a flame? How ſhall he kill that dares not be angry? be *Adulterous* in act, that did not firſt tranſgreſs in his deſire? How ſhall he be *perjured* that fears an oath? or *defraud* that permits not himſelf to covet? In the like manner all *poſitive acts* of vertue are but the natural effects of the interior habit. Where the love of God is ſeated in the Heart, 'twill operate in all the faculties, keep them in a buſie endeavour of doing acceptable ſervice: when *fear* is planted there, it will break forth into outward reverence and duty, and ſo proportionable 'twill be in every other inſtance. 'Tis therefore an advice well becoming the wiſdom of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 4. *To keep the heart with all diligence*: But then it is withal the work of him who is greater than *Solomon*, to teach us how to do this: For *unleſs he keep that City, the watchman waketh but in vain*. If he inſtruct not to ſecure thoſe iſſues of life, they will betray and ruine, appear indeed *the ſavour of death unto death*. Now of this divine art of *Tacticks* and defence, Chriſtianity is the only School, and therefore moſt fitly qualified for the producing all thoſe ſupernatural excellencies, to which the timely prepoſſeſſion of the heart is the rudiment and principle.

By its Promiſes.

4. And as the *preceptive* part enjoyns the moſt exact and elevated vertue, ſo is it moſt advantageouſly enforc'd by the *Promiſſory*, which both in reſpect of the kind and value of the rewards, and alſo the manner of propoſing them, is moſt exquiſitely adapted to the ſame end.

Promiſes not Temporary and Carnal, but Spiritual.

5. For firſt, If we conſider the nature of the things promiſed, we ſhall find they are not groſs and *carnal*, ſuch as may court and gratifie the beſtial part of us; but ſuch as are proportioned to the ſupreme and leading principle, as feaſt a *Soul*, and ſuit with the capacities of an *intelligence*. All the beatitudes the Goſpel tenders to its Votaries, either relate to the *purity* or peace of the mind in this life; or elſe to its completer *felicity* hereafter. And though 'tis true, the body is not wholly unconſidered, though the addition of all temporal neceſſaries be promiſed, yet even thoſe are for the Soul's ſake, either to ſecure it from the ſin of ſolicitude and diſtruſt, or to preſerve it a uſeful inſtrument for the other's ſervice. And as for the future glory in which the body is to partake, 'tis to be obſerved, that fleſh and blood cannot inherit it; that load of earth which now engages to corruption muſt be put off, muſt be calcin'd and ſpiritualiz'd; and thus made glorious, be cloathed upon with Glory? So that in all the Goſpel diſpenſation, there is no *proviſion for the fleſh*, its luſts and ſenſualities. And then ſure there cannot be a more unanſwerable argument againſt our providing for it, than to ſee it left out of God's care. Indeed had we propoſals of a *Mahumetan*

metan Paradice, were we to expect our bliſs only in the ſatiating our appetites, it might be reaſonable here to whet them before-hand, to ſtretch them to the utmoſt wideneſs, or in the Prophets phraſe, *to enlarge our deſires as Hell*, and by frequent antepaſts excite our guſt for that profuſe perpetual meal. Or, were we only to have our portion in this life, to enjoy an uninterrupted affluence of outward comforts, 'twere but good husbandry to improve them to the height, and the Wiſe man's advice would then ceaſe to be Irony, *Eccleſ.* 12. 9. *Rejoyce O young man, and let thy heart chear thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and the ſight of thine eyes.* Had we only the proſpect of a *Canaan*, ſuch an eternal inheritance as a conquering Sword could give, as the Salvation of a *Joſhua*, and the affluence of Milk and Honey could produce : 'Twould be no wonder if we never voluntarily endured the thirſt and famine of the wilderneſs, but be always, as they, deſiring meat for our luſt, projecting the gratifying thoſe deſires in whoſe repletion we plac'd our happineſs. But when our Religion makes us no ſuch tender, when all its hopes are of another make, invite to thoſe Diviner Joys of which ſenſuality has no capacity or taſte, what pretence can we have to cheriſh that *here*, which we muſt wholly be diveſted of *hereafter* ? Thoſe immaterial felicities we expect, do naturally ſuggeſt to us, the neceſſity of preparing our appetites, and hungers for them, without which Heaven can be no Heaven to us : For ſince the pleaſure of any thing reſults from the agreement between it and the deſire, what ſatisfaction can *Spiritual* enjoyments give unto a *Carnal* mind ? Alas, what delight would it be to the Swine to be wrapt in fine Linnen, and laid in Odours ? his ſences are not gratify'd by any ſuch delicacies, nor would he feel any thing beſides the torment of being with-held from the Mire. And as little complacency would a brutiſh Soul find in thoſe purer and refined pleaſures, which can only upbraid, not ſatisfie him. So that could we by an impoſſible ſuppoſition fancy ſuch a one aſſumed to thoſe fruitions, his pleaſure ſure would be as little as his preparation for it was. Thoſe *eyes* which have continually beheld vanity, would be dazled, not delighted with the *Beatifick viſion* ; neither could that *Tongue*, which has accuſtom'd it ſelf only to Oaths and Blaſphemies, find Harmony or Muſick in a *Hallelujah*. 'Tis the peculiar privilege of the pure in heart, *that they ſhall ſee God* ; and if any others could ſo invade this their incloſure, as to take Heaven by violence, it ſurely would be a very joyleſs poſſeſſion to theſe men, and only place them in a condition to which they have the greateſt averſation and antipathy. So that holineſs here, is not only neceſſary to the acquiring, but the enjoyment of Bliſs hereafter : and therefore unleſs men will contrive to annihilate their joys, and affect the monſtrous riddle of being tormented in Heaven, they cannot but from this ſpirituality of the promiſes, infer a neceſſity of purifying themſelves, and being capable at leaſt of innocent Celeſtial joys ; and ſince that only can be done by vertuous practice here on Earth, the Obligation thereto muſt needs be very preſſing and indiſpenſable. And as the *nature* of the promiſes directs to this, ſo does the great tranſcendent *value* encourage and animate. *Hope* is the grand exciter of induſtry, and as the object of Hope is more or leſs *deſirable*, ſo is the endeavour more *intenſe* or *remiſs* ; and upon this ground we muſt conclude the Chriſtian has all reaſon to be the moſt indefatigable, ſeeing his expectations are the nobleſt and moſt encouraging. That they are ſo, we cannot but acknowledge, if we admit of the deſcription which the *ſpirit* gives: that *ſpirit*, which, as he ſeals us to it, ſo is himſelf the earneſt of that Inheritance. He in the Sacred *Scriptures*

tures has drawn up a Map of the Country which we are to enter: And ſure we may ſay of it as *Caleb* and *Joſhua* did of *Canaan*, *Numb.* 14. 7. *The land is an exceeding good land.* For firſt, if we conſider the Negative advantages it has, we ſhall find there is an abſence of all the ills, deſtructive or affrightful unto humane nature. *There ſhall be no more death, nor ſorrow, nor crying nor pain*, *Revel.* 21. 4. Here alas, we are infeſted by all theſe. *Sorrow* and *Pain*, prey and inſult on all the comforts of our lives; leave us not a Gourd, which is not like that of *Jonah*, ſmitten with theſe Worms: and then comes Death the grand devourer, and ſpares not *Life* itſelf. Nay, thoſe little *reſpites* which we have from theſe are ſo imbitter'd by unpleaſant Expectations and Preſages, that we are ſad before we are *afflicted*: in *pain* without a *diſeaſe*, and in *death* in the midſt of *life*: and then a State exempted, not only from the Calamities but the fears of theſe, may well deſerve to be lookt upon with appetite.

Heavenly, Glorious, Eternal.

6. But Heaven is deſign'd for our reward, as well as reſcue, and therefore is *adumbrated* by all thoſe *poſitive excellencies* which can endear or recommend. It is a *Crown*, and not that of *thorns*, ſuch as our *Saviour*'s was, and ſuch as the more affected *Diadems* of the World oft prove unto the wearer; *but one of Glory*: nor is that *Crown* nor that *Glory* like our *ſublunary* ſplendors, which ſuddenly vaniſh, and leave the poſſeſſors to the greater obſcurity and contempt; but 'tis *permanent*, ſuch *as fades not away*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 4. or in S. *Paul*'s phraſe, *an eternal weight of glory.* But to give you its more comprehenſive Character, *'tis a being with the Lord*, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 17. Nay, 'tis a poſſeſſing even God himſelf. *He ſhall be their God*, *Rev.* 22. 2. and what can he want who poſſeſſes him who is all things? How can he fail of the moſt raviſhing delight, that ſtands before him, *in whoſe preſence is the fulneſs of Joy*, and *at whoſe right hand are pleaſures*, and thoſe not ſhort or tranſient, *but for evermore?* So indefeaſable is our eſtate in thoſe Joys, that if we do not like mad prodigals ſell it in reverſion, we ſhall when we are once inveſted, be beyond the poſſibility of ill husbandry, not have in it any power to undo our ſelves. Now ſurely theſe are great and precious *promiſes*, ſuch as may well ſuſtain the weight of that inference the *Apoſtle* builds upon them; and engage us to *cleanſe* our ſelves from all *filthineſs* both from the *fleſh* and *ſpirit*, and *to perfect holineſs in the fear of God*, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. for they addreſs to that *Principle* which is confeſtly predominant in our *Nature*; ſo that if the love of *Chriſt* cannot, yet the love of our *ſelves* may conſtrain us. How muſt it then affront and baffle the enticements of ſin, when we compare its empty vaniſhing *pleaſures* with thoſe ſolid and durable *joys?* What a foreſtalling will it be of Satan's markets, that God bids ſo much fairer for us; offers us that to which his ταῦτα πάντα σοι δώσω, *all this will I give*, (could he make ſuch a whole-ſale) can bear no proportion: and how then ſhall we ever barter it away for thoſe little petty commodities he retails to us; or make any other reply to his proffers, than a *get thee behind me, Satan?* For alas! can we remember that we are *candidates* for a Kingdom, and yet retain the abject ſpirits of *ſlaves?* Do we expect to reign hereafter, and yet depoſe our ſelves before-hand here? ſuffer every the vileſt luſt to rule over us? Is ſo glorious a prize annext to the victory, and will it not enſnare the fainteſt heart and feebleſt hands to the combate? What Lions can we fear in the way which this hope is not *Sampſon* enough to encounter? How *light* are our heavieſt, how *momentany* our moſt laſting Afflictions, if balanced with that *eternal weight of Glory?* Are we ſpoil'd of our goods? Here is a reſerve of treaſure, which no *Thief*, neither the ſlye, nor the avowed, the pilferer, nor the ſequeſtrator can invade.

vade. Are we reduc'd to our *Saviour's* deſtitution, not to have *where to lay our head? yet we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands eternal in the Heavens.* Are we reproacht for the name of *Chriſt?* that *Ignominy* ſerves but to advance our future *Glory*, every ſuch *Libel* here, becomes *Panegyrick* there. Nay, are we perſecuted to death? that ſends us but to take poſſeſſion of the Crown of Life. Upon ſuch ſure ground does our Chriſtianity ſet us. While we make good its condition, it pulls out the ſting of all that is moſt deadly: And in a more comprehenſive ſenſe, poſſeſſes us of the priviledge promiſed the *Diſciples, that nothing ſhould by any means hurt them, Mar.* 16. The moſt adverſe chances being but like the plowing and breaking the ground, in order to a more plentiful harveſt. And yet we are not ſo wholly turned off to that reverſion, as to have no ſupplies for the preſent; for beſides the comfort of ſo great and certain an expectation in another *life*, we have promiſes alſo for *this*. Even of all thoſe internal and ſpiritual ſatisfactions which attend the *practice of piety*. The feaſt of a good Conſcience is the true *Chriſtian's* daily diet; and ſure whatever the rich men of the world think, he only can be ſaid to fare deliciouſly: Nay, he has yet more *ſupernatural* food, *Manna* rain'd down immediately from Heaven: The *Holy Spirit* ſent on purpoſe to refreſh and ſupport him: Thoſe Joys which differ rather in degree than kind, from thoſe which are to be his final portion. And that the *Soul* may not be too much incommoded in her houſe of clay, there is proviſion made for that alſo, ſuch neceſſaries ſecur'd to the body, as may keep it in *Tenantable* repair: We have *Chriſt's* expreſs promiſe for it, that *to thoſe that ſeek the Kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, all theſe things ſhall be added*: If not that ſuperfluity which may oppreſs and load, (render the *body* rather the Tomb than Manſion of the *ſoul*) yet ſuch as may ſuſtain and ſupport us: and ſure 'tis eaſie to decide which is the happier lot. In ſhort, we are ſure enough to defray the charge of that voyage, which lands us at *Eternal Bliſs*: and certainly he muſt be of a very ſluggiſh or querulous humour, that ſhall demur upon ſetting out, or demand higher encouragements.

Propos'd with evidence and plainneſs.

7. And as the *nature* and *value* of the *Promiſes* render them moſt proper engagements and incentives to all *vertue*; ſo if we conſider the *manner* of propoſing, we ſhall find them in that reſpect alſo highly contributive to the ſame end. For firſt, They are clear and expreſs, not wrapt up in dark *ænigmatical* inſinuations, wherein men muſt exerciſe their *ſagacity* as well as their faith: but reveal'd with that plainneſs, that 'tis impoſſible for any who knows but the letter of the Goſpel, to be ignorant of the Eternal Reward it propoſes. And herein the deference belongs to *Chriſtianity* above all other *Religions*, ſome whereof have left men ſo much in the dark, that many Sects among them have denied the immortality of the *Soul*; and ſure there were but faint encouragements they could propoſe unto that *vertue* which was to periſh with them. What ſhould animate them to the rugged ſevere taſtes of reſtraining appetites, ſubduing paſſions, eradicating habits, who diſcerned no rewards for blameleſs *Souls*? 'Tis true indeed, *Vertue* is in herſelf perfectly amiable, though ſhe brought no dowry, but experience ſhews us ſhe has not many *Platonick* lovers: And when ſo few are ambitious to wed her, when ſhe brings an Eternal Inheritance with her, we may eaſily gueſs how little ſhe will be ſought without it. When men once conclude that their *Spirits* ſhall vaniſh into the ſoft Air; the inference is very obvious, *Come on, let us uſe the Creatures as in youth*; as we find it elegantly purſued, *Wiſd.* 2. But of thoſe who acknowledged a future being, their perceptions were very miſty and obſcure. The Heathens

had ſuch confus'd notions of their *Elyſium*, that the *Epithet* of *ſhades* belong'd more properly to the darkneſs than the refreſhment, and was a reward fit for the Votaries of thoſe ambiguous *Oracles* they conſulted. And proportionably to the obſcurity of their hopes were the Exerciſes of their *Vertue*: their *Piety* was even overwhelm'd and confounded by the multitude of their *Deities*; nay, which is yet ſtranger, their *Gods* themſelves ſeem to have been loſt in their own croud: elſe ſure the *Athenians* would never have inſcrib'd an Altar to the *unknown God*. And indeed their offices were generally ſuch, as if they had been devoted to no other, they having as little diſcerning of their Worſhip as of their *God*. 'Twas wrapt up in clouds and darkneſs; had myſterious receſſes, to which the common worſhipper had no admittance; ſuch as were to require a veneration only by not being underſtood: And though this muſt needs deprive their ſervices of that ſpirit and quickneſs, which conſtitutes the *vertue* of devotion, yet alas, their *Religion* had more than that negative contrariety to *vertue*. Many of their *worſhips* being nothing but a ſolemnity of the fouleſt *vices*: and their *Divinity* taught them to violate *Morality*. A deceit *Satan* could not probably ſo long have triumpht in, had they had the Goſpel notion of Heaven; for ſure they could not have ſuppos'd their *Gods* of ſuch mutable inclinations, as to affect *purity* in their Cohabitants, and *pollution* in their Votaries: or ſuch incongruous diſpenſers of rewards, as to apportion an impeccable ſtate hereafter to the moſt flagitious criminals on Earth.

Not as to the Jews *in Types and outward Ceremonies.*

8. As to the *Jews*, 'tis true, they deriv'd their light from a clearer Fountain, were under the *Oeconomy* of immediate Revelation, and therefore might be ſuppos'd to have had a freer proſpect into that Heaven, from whence their *Law* deſcended; yet even they were in this, as in many other particulars, under *Moſes* his veil, had rather dark *adumbrations*, and thoſe too overwhelm'd with the multitude of expreſs temporal promiſes. The earthly *Canaan* lay ſo fair and open to their proſpect, as eaſily intercepted their view of the *Heavenly*; and their *faith* muſt remove, at leaſt overlook, that *mountain*, before it could come to any ſight of the *Horizon* and extended *Sky*. Nay, when 'tis remembred that the *Sadducees*, a great and learned part of their Doctors, denied all future being, we muſt think the intimations of it were very obſcure; it being ſcarce imaginable, that any conſidering men ſhould think the Soul expir'd with the Body, upon any other ground, but that they knew not what after-ſtate to aſſign it. So that though they wanted not figures and ſhadows, or, as the Apoſtle calls them, *patterns of Heavenly things, Heb.* 9. 23. yet they ſeem'd not to have been well underſtood, and the generality of men were not only in their Perſons, but their Underſtandings, denied entrance into the *holy of holies*; penetrated not that myſtical repreſentation, which was within the Veil: And anſwerable to this dimneſs of their perceptions, was the whole *ſyſteme* and *body* of their *Religion*, which rather entertain'd it ſelf in thoſe *external bodily* performances, which affected the *ſenſe*, than in thoſe *Divine* and *Spiritual* raptures, which purify'd and elevated the *Soul*. 'Tis the *Apoſtle's* affirmation, *Heb.* 9. *That the ſacrifices there offered could not make him that did the ſervice perfect, as pertaining to the conſcience*, and he gives the reaſon, in ſubjoyning, that they ſtood only in *meats and drinks*, and *carnal ordinances*. Alas what propriety had all their legal purifications towards the cleanſing of the mind? That might be in the *Mire* while the body was in the *Laver*: and while the ſurface of the man was ſprinkl'd with blood, the heart might be more beſtial than thoſe creatures who lent the *ablution*. And indeed, if we conſider their morality, we ſhall find that outſide formal ceremony

mony had proceeded to infect and poiſon that alſo. The outward reſtraint, the bare forbearance of an actual commiſſion, being by them thought a full compliance with all the Negative Precepts: So that we ſee *Chriſt* is fain to aſſert the Internal part of the Obligation, and extend the duty to the thoughts and inclinations. Beſides, thoſe acts of *vertue* they perform'd were commonly ſuch as had an Aſpect, rather on their temporal well-being, than diſtant and unſeen rewards; their Juſtice and Charity confin'd to their own *Nation*, directed to the flouriſhing of their own *Commonwealth*: whereas *Aliens* were devoted to their rapine and deſpight; ſo that if they were *vertues*, they were rather *Political* than *Moral*, and indeed while they placed ſo much of their hopes on *Earth*, lookt on *ſecular* plenty and tranquility as their reward, 'twas but conſonant they ſhould ſquare their endeavours by that meaſure, and conſider things not ſimply in their native properties of good or ill, but according to their tendency towards that they eſteem'd their *felicity*.

Promiſes better in their nature, and in the terms of Aſſurance.

9. But God has provided, as the *Apoſtle* ſays, *Heb.* 11. 40. *better things for us*, has not only made a better Covenant with us, but has *eſtabliſht it upon better promiſes*, *Chap.* 8. 6. given us clearer revelations, not only of our *duty* but our *recompence*; the Veil in *Chriſt* is done away, and we all with open face, *Behold as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. The Goſpel puts the evidences of our inheritance into our own hands, ſeal'd by his explicit and direct promiſe, who cannot lye: and that not only engag'd by way of *munificence*, but bargain and contract, as the purchaſe of that *price*, which our *Redeemer* fully paid in our behalf. And ſure this is in the *Apoſtle*'s phraſe *ſtrong conſolation*; and if ſo, it muſt be forcible enticement likewiſe: He cannot but run alacriouſly, who has the prize in his Eye, nor can S. *Paul* uſe a more preſſing argument to his *Corinthians*, *To be ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*, than this aſſurance, *That their labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 58.

Are conditional, and thereby engage us to holineſs.

10. And as this clear propoſal of the *promiſes* is moſt proper to encourage and inſpirit our endeavours, ſo is the conditionality moſt efficacious to neceſſitate and engage them. Had *Heaven* been only promis'd as a largeſs, and with a blind promiſcuous bounty diſpens'd without diſcrimination, how much it might have rais'd our *gratitude*, I know not, but ſure it would not have excited our *induſtry*, which in all inſtances we find is whetted by intereſt: and where that is otherwiſe ſecur'd, men generally eſtimate it a part of the benefit that their labour is ſuperſeded; and pleaſe themſelves no leſs in a lazy beqeuſt, than a full enjoyment. So that indeed it is this circumſtance of the *promiſes* that muſt give life to all the reſt, and make them operative toward the producing of *good life*; for admit the *joys* we expect never ſo *Divine* and *Spiritual* for their kind, never ſo great and tranſcendant for degree, and theſe alſo repreſented to us in the moſt clear and convincing manner: Yet if they be tendered not as objects of our choice, but the certainty of our fate, *felicities* which we are only concerned to enjoy, but not to acquire, they may make us glad, but ſurely not diligent; it being but a cold inducement to any undertaking to be aſſur'd 'tis perfectly needleſs: We have therefore all reaſon to confeſs it our greateſt advantage towards *vertue*, that God has ſo linkt our *hopes* and our *duty* together. And indeed when we conſider the great diſproportion between the one and the other; the infinity of the *reward*, with the deſpicableneſs of the *ſervice*; we muſt reſolve that he had no other deſign in making his *promiſes* conditional, than to engage us by our intereſt to that *holineſs*, to which he ſaw our inclinations did not bind us: that it was an artifice of

his *love* to enſnare us into two *felicities* by propoſing of one, enforce us to take one good in the way to another, *vertue* in paſſage to *glory*.

Are alſo enforc'd by menaces of puniſhment

11. And indeed who would not think this method ſo invincibly efficacious, as might ſuperſede the neceſſity of any other, but God, who underſtands our thoughts long before, *Pſal.* 139. 1. foreſaw that notwithſtanding this propoſal of a *Canaan*, there would be *Reubenites* and *Gadites*, who would ſet up their reſt on this ſide of *Jordan*; ſo intent on the commodity of their Cattle, as to be content themſelves to be part of the Herd, and *become like the Beaſts that periſh*: That there would be men of ſo ignoble, diſingenuous tempers, as none of theſe cords of a Man would be able to draw: and therefore there is another part of the *Goſpel-Oeconomy* fitted to their capacities; the *threats* and *interminations*, thoſe terrors of the *Lord*, which as Goads may drive thoſe brutiſh Creatures who will not be attracted: That thoſe, who think themſelves perfectly unconcern'd in *David*'s queſtion, *Who ſhall aſcend unto the hill of the Lord*, *Pſal.* 24. 3. may yet ſtartle at *Eſay*'s, *Who among us can dwell with everlaſting burnings?* Of ſo formidable a kind are thoſe menaces, as is ſufficient to awake the moſt drowſie ſtupid *Soul*, and are moſt apt to operate upon that part of their temper, which evacuated the gentler method: that very ſenſuality which made them deſpiſe *Heaven*, may help to enhance the dread of *Hell*; the lack of a *drop of water* will be moſt inſupportable to him who fared deliciouſly every day; thoſe *Flames* will be yet more ſcorching to thoſe bodies, who by ſtudious effeminacies and ſoftneſs have ſuperadded an artificial tenderneſs to the natural; nor will the *gnawing of the worm* appear more intolerable to any, than thoſe who here make it their buſineſs to tye up its *Jaws*, gag or ſtupifie that *Conſcience* which would now admoniſh, but will there torment. And when to this is added the *perpetuity* of theſe pains, that *the worm ſhall never die, the fire never be quencht*, certainly this puts ſuch an edge upon the terror, as may well make it, in the *Apoſtle*'s phraſe, *quick* and *powerful*, *ſearching even to the dividing aſunder of the Soul and Spirit, the joynts and marrow*, when we are aſſured *that the Ax is thus laid unto the root of the Tree, and that every Tree that brings not forth good Fruit muſt be hewn down and caſt into the Fire*, we ſhall ſure be warn'd *to bring forth meet fruits of repentance*, *and fly from the wrath to come*.

Are aſſiſted by ſupernatural aids in the performance of Duty.

12. But becauſe neither invitations nor threats can avail with thoſe who are any way invincibly impeded to apply them to their benefit: Since the moſt *glorious prize*, the moſt formidable danger, is inſignificant to him, who wants power to run unto the one, or from the other; it has pleaſed God to inſpirit and actuate all his *Evangelical* methods, by a concurrence of *ſupernatural* ſtrength, makes it not only eligible but poſſible, I may ſay eaſie and pleaſant for us to do whatever he commands us: and notwithſtanding our natural debility, makes us through *Chriſt* which ſtrengthens us, *able to do all things*: By his Spirit he prevents, aſſiſts, reſtrains, excites, comforts, convinces; gives Grace, and adds to that the happier largeſs of a will to uſe it, and knowledge to diſcern the want of more. Infuſing to the *Soul* an ardent thirſt of greater powers, and readier means of ſervice, which the performance actuates to greater ſtrengths, and yet inflames to new deſires, and more importunate purſuits, which God at once beſtows and crowns his own donations; ſtill giving unto him that has, till that at laſt he give himſelf; and *grace is ſwallowed up in glory*. And to aſſure us of this aid, he has been pleaſed to oblige himſelf; deſcends to the ſolemnity of a *Pact* and *Covenant*; has indented with us, and conſtituted it a principal part of the new and everlaſting *Covenant made with mankind in the blood*

of the Son of God, to ſend the comforter, his Holy Spirit, to be with us till the end of the world, and do all this. So that the Goſpel is at once the aſſigner of our tasks, and the *Magazine* of our ſtrength ; ſo much Spirit goes along with that Letter ; ſo much internal Grace is annexed to its outward adminiſtration, as will to all, who do not reſiſt it, infallibly render it *the power of God to Salvation.* For 'tis not the ſole privilege of a S. *Paul*, but the common portion of all *Chriſtians, That God's grace ſhall be ſufficient for them*: which is ſure a more Goſpel-like promiſe, than that it ſhould be too ſtrong for them ; ſo violent and irreſiſtible as to commit a rape upon their *Spirits* ; ſuch a mighty wind as drives them headlong upon *duty.* Indeed this competency is of all other proportions the moſt *incentive* to induſtry ; we ſee in *Temporals*, too little makes men deſperate, and too much careleſs ; and certainly 'twould be the ſame in *Spirituals* : But now when we have ſtock enough to ſet up with, and that too of ſo improvable a nature, that is capable of infinite advancement, and yet on the other ſide no leſs capable of total decay alſo, it being given with this expreſs condition, that upon neglect it ſhall be withdrawn : So that our own ſloth may make us *poor*, but nothing elſe can keep us from being abundantly *rich* : What can be imagin'd more animating to diligence and endeavour ? And this being the condition wherein our *Chriſtianity* has placed us, added to the former conſiderations, will beyond exception or *ſubterfuge*, evince its perfect *aptitude* and *fitneſs* for the End to which it was aim'd, *the Planting and nouriſhing all true Vertue among men*, the introducing the Tree of Life into the world again, and ſo forming us a *Paradiſe* even admidſt the Briars and Thorns of our Exil'd ſtate.

CHAP. II.

The Character of Chriſtian-mens Practice, ſhewing their multiplied failance both from the rule of that holy profeſſion, and its genuine effect.

Difficult to reſiſt the force of Chriſtianity.

1. AND now who can ſuſpect that a cauſe ſo rightly diſpos'd, ſhould miſs of its *effect* ? That this ſo *auſpicious Planet* ſhould be counter-influenc'd by any *malevolent Star* ? Or that what has ſo many tenures in us, ſhould be finally diſſeis'd ? For, admit we have not the Piety to be prevail'd upon by the reverence of the *Author* ; yet the excellency of its *compoſition* does ſo much recommend it to our Reaſon, that we muſt put off the beſt part of our *Nature* to evacuate the force of our Religion : Nay, ſuppoſing us to have done that too, to have ſtruck our ſelves out of the liſt of *Rationals*, yet if we keep but the rank of *Animals*, if we have not extinguiſht paſſion and ſence, it deſcends even to them ; addreſſes to our hopes and fears with moſt importunate ſollicitations, and convincing motives : So that unleſs we have the abſurd ill luck to have much of the *Stoick*, and nothing of the *Philoſopher*, 'twill be impoſſible to reſiſt its impreſſions : And ſure he that contemplates *this*, will be apt with ſome confidence to conclude *Chriſtendom* to be the *Goſhen* of the world, not only in reſpect of its *light*, but of its *immunity* from all thoſe *Locuſts* and *Caterpillars*, thoſe ſwarms of mean and ſordid Vices which both cover and devour the reſt of the *Earth*.

Degeneracy of Chriſtians.

2. But this muſt be the inference of a meer *contemplative*, a Recluſe that converſes only with his own meditations : For let him be ſo much *ſecular*, as once to look abroad, the moſt *tranſient* glance will ſerve to unravel

all his hopeful *ſpeculation*, and ſhew him that *Chriſtendom* may be as much *Heathen* as *America* : Whereas it is uſually ſaid, that ill *Manners* produce good Laws, we have reverſt the *Aphoriſm*, and our good *Law* has introduced the moſt corrupt manners. Our holy *faith*, which like a foundation ſhould ſupport good works, has like a gulf *ſwallow'd* them up. And ſo univerſal a depravation is there among us, that we have ſcarce any thing left to diſtinguiſh us from the moſt barbarous people, but a better name, and worſe vices.

Their lives contrary to their profeſſion.

3. And here, what terms of wonder or of grief can be ſignificant enough to expreſs or to bewail ſo ſtrange and ſo perverſe degeneration, that the *light* of the *world* ſhould thus darken it ? the *ſalt* of the *earth* be the means of putrifying and corrupting it ? That thoſe who were by God drawn out from the *Heathen* world, ſhould ſo outvy the *Gentiles* crimes, as if they had forſaken them, only becauſe they were too *innocent* ? *This* indeed is one of *Satan*'s ſubtileſt ſtratagems, to fill Chriſt's *Camp* thus with his *Souldiers*, by whoſe inteſtine treacheries, he has been more *triumphant* than by all his open aſſaults and avowed hoſtilities. What a late *States-man* ſaid (*Prophetically*, if we may judge by the event) of *England*, that *it was a vivacious animal that could never die except it killed itſelf*, is no leſs true of the *Church*, which has always been *invulnerable* againſt all *darts*, but what have been taken out of its own *quiver*. Of *this* the *Primitive* times were pregnant teſtimonies, where all the moſt witty cruelties, the moſt bloody perſecutions, never made any breach in her : But ſhe ſtood firmer for all thoſe batteries, and like an Arch'd Building, became more ſtrong and compact, by that weight which was deſigned to cruſh her : But the *Vice* of *Profeſſors* undermines her very foundation, and does as much exceed the deſtructiveneſs of the moſt hoſtile aſſaults, as inteſtine treachery is more ruinous and fatal, than foreign violence.

Admirable lives of Primitive Chriſtians.

4. As long as the *lives* of Chriſtians were the *tranſcripts* of their doctrine, they rendred it venerable to all, and gave a preſumption there was ſomething more than *humane* in it, that could work ſuch ſignal *effects*, that could ſo transform *men* as to make the *adulterer* chaſte, the *drunkard* temperate, the *covetous* liberal, the *contentious* peaceable. *This*, This was the way to *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Tit.* 2. 10. And then the *rule of contraries* directs us to conclude very diſtant *effects* from our now ſo diſtant *practices*, that our very *religion* ſhould partake of the *infamy* of our lives, and be thought rather a *myſtery* of *iniquity* than *godlineſs*.

Religion ſuffers for the wickedneſs of its Profeſſors.

5. Thus is *Chriſt* wounded in the houſe of his *friends*, and has more *reproach* caſt on him by thoſe that profeſs his name, than by the loudeſt blaſphemies of thoſe that oppoſe it. For when thoſe who have not opportunity to examine our *faith*, ſee the enormouſneſs of our *works*, what ſhould hinder them from meaſuring the *Maſter* by the *Diſciples* ? It being ſcarce imaginable that any one *Sect* of men ſhould ſo univerſally run counter to all the rules of their profeſſion : For let any ſober Heathen look upon *Chriſtendom*, as it is at this day weltring in the blood, not of *Martyrdom* but *War*, and will it be poſſible for him to think it owns a Goſpel of *Peace* ; or that thoſe who ſo perpetually do thoſe outrages they are unwilling to ſuffer, profeſs obedience to the *Royal Law* of *Love thy neighbour as thy ſelf*, *Jam.* 2. 8. Can he ſee the violence and oppreſſions, the *frauds* and underminings, the buſie *ſcramblings* for little parcels of *Earth* ; and yet believe we count our ſelves *ſtrangers* and pilgrims in it, and have laid up our treaſure in *Heaven* ? Can he *obſerve* the ſtrange and almoſt

univerſal diſtortion of ſpeech, whereby it has loſt its native property of being *interpreter* of the mind, and under *intelligible* words ſo far exhibits the *Babel* confuſion, that no man underſtands another's meaning ? and can he *imagine* we have any ſuch *Precepts*, as *Lye not one to another*, or any ſuch *penalty* upon the infringer, as *excluſion from the new Jeruſalem* ? Shall he *hear* our *God* mentioned more frequently and earneſtly in our *imprecations* than our *prayers*, and every part of our crucified *Saviour*, re-crucified in our horrid *oaths* ; And ſhall he not think that his *ſecond* executioners bear him as little reverence as his *firſt* ; Or that he has given no ſuch command as *Swear not at all* ? When he diſcerns *ſelf-preſervation* bowed to as the *Supream Law* ; Can he ever dream of another ſo inconſiſtent *obligation* as that of *taking up the Croſs* ? Or that *ſuffering for Righteouſneſs ſake* is one of our greateſt *felicities*, when he ſees us run ſo affrighted from it, that no crime, perjury, rebellion, murder, is block enough in our way to ſtop our flight ? In *fine*, when he conſiders how much of our buſineſs it is, firſt to excite, and then to cloy the fleſh, to ſpur it on to riots even beyond its own propenſions, that the whole year is but one mad carnival, and we are *voluptuous* not ſo much upon *deſire* or appetite, as by way of *exploit* and bravery : When, I ſay, he conſiders this, can he poſſibly gueſs our *inſtitution* directs us to beat down the body, to *mortifie the fleſh with the affections and luſts*, interdicts us all *rioting and drunkenneſs*, *chambering and wantonneſs*, and *all proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſt thereof* ? Certainly all rules of diſcourſe will direct him to the quite contrary concluſion. And when he ſees a ſet of men that have enhans'd the common humane pravity, he will be apt to infer their Principles have taught them the improvement : And upon that ſuppoſal he wanted not temptation to his Option that ſaid, *Let my Soul be with the Philoſophers.*

6. And while we thus miſ-repreſent our holy profeſſion to *others*, it will be no wonder if we finally do it to *our ſelves*, that we forget its *native ſhape*, and look on her only in the *ugly dreſs* our ſelves have put on, and that effect ſeems already too viſible among us : Our lives have ſo long confuted it, that we triumph over it as a baffled thing ; and like *Amnon*, loath it becauſe we have raviſht and defil'd it. Many of us take notice of the better Morals of *Turks* and *Infidels* not in reproach of our ſelves, but our Religion, and becauſe we have ſo many *Lepers*, think *Abanah* and *Pharphar*, better than all the waters of *Iſrael* ; this is openly in the mouths of many, but is ſo prodigiouſly *irrarational* as well as *unjuſt*, that one can ſcarce think it poſſible to be in their *hearts*, unleſs they be purſued by the fate of habitual lyars, that at laſt come to perſwade themſelves. *and is contemn'd thereby* ;

7. Certainly there is no other parallel inſtance wherein men conclude ſo perverſly : He that ſhews a man that precipice upon whoſe brink he ſtands, that intreats, yea, importunes him to retire from the *danger* : nay, bribes him with the greateſt rewards to chuſe ſafety, has done all that can be expected from a friend, or charitable man : And if after all, the wretched perſon ſo adviſ'd, ſhall caſt himſelf head-long upon ruine, aſſuredly no *inqueſt* would return his Murder in any other *form* than that of *Felo de ſe.* And why then ſhould our Chriſtianity be accus'd of thoſe ills which it would infallibly avert, if our obſtinacy would permit it ? Indeed the charge is ſo wild, that it ſeems rather deſign'd as an artifice of diverſion, a ſprout of that firſt Fig-tree, which was to hide the nakedneſs of lapſed *Adam*. Men think it policy to transfer their guilts, and are willing, the *violence* of their luſts ſhould paſs for the *impotence* of their Religion. Like irregular *Patients* blaming their *Phyſician* for thoſe ill accidents *ought not to be charg'd with their guilt.*

which they know owing only to their own unrulineſs. A pregnant teſtimony of the reproachful nature of ſin, that men are content to betake themſelves to the moſt forlorn ſhifts to avoid the owning it : But the conſciouſneſs is ſo preſſing and intolerable, that with many it drives on to yet higher outrages. 'Tis not enough for men to decry their *Chriſtianity* as a feeble *inſignificant* thing, but they load it even with contradictory *imputations* ; and that which ſometimes they call *the fooliſhneſs of Preaching*, to bring it into ſcorn and contempt, ſhall at another be ſtiled an *art* and *trick*, to bring it into ſuſpicion and hatred, be arraign'd for impoſture and deceit, a project of impoſing upon credulous ſouls, and gaining real advantages to the managers, while they feed the ſilly *Proſelyte* with imaginary ones. How groundleſs a calumny this is, as it appears from the ſanctity, and eminent ſimplicity of Chriſtian Religion, which above all things excludes fraud and falſhood ; ſo alſo from the deſignments and aims of its firſt promulgators, who as they cannot be ſuppos'd dextrous enough to lay ſuch a ſcene of taking Pageantry ; ſo all their viſible acquiſts were ſcourgings and impriſonments, perſecutions and death. If this were the caſe, it would indeed go near to reconcile the before-mentioned contradictory *imputations*, whilſt the impoſing upon credulous ſouls at this dear rate, would be in very deed *the fooliſhneſs of Preaching*, the greateſt madneſs in the world. Men of common reaſon would be aſham'd to uſe ſuch frivolous cavils : But who can without horror hear them from profeſt Chriſtians ? That while *Infidels* are modeſt in their reproaches, look upon our Doctrine only as erroneous, *Diſciples* ſhould be bitter, and charge it as inſiduous and treacherous ? Thus does the *Church* experiment the truth of her bleſſed *Lord's Predictions*, and finds her *foes are thoſe of her own houſe* : And though ſhe be Chriſt's *Dove*, yet is ſubjected to the fate of the *Viper*, and has her bowels torn out by thoſe that ſpring from them.

Principles of Religion now called in queſtion,

8. Theſe are the growing conſequences of *reſolute impiety*, he who will not be kept within the bounds of duty, ſeldom contents himſelf with that bare violation : He not only *breaks the bonds in ſunder*, but *caſts them away* too ; is impatient they ſhould keep a reputation to upbraid him, when he has robb'd them of the power of reſtraining him : And *this* ſure is the bottom of all that deep reaſoning, by which men have learnt to argue themſelves and others out of their *Creed* : And though this be indeed the great *Arcanum*, the *Philoſopher's ſtone* they aim at ; yet they have met with another good experiment by the way : And have, by I know not what *Chymiſtry*, extracted a reputation out of theſe moſt unapt *materials*. He paſſes for a conſidering man that diſputes principles, and is thought moſt to own his *reaſon* that leaſt owns his *faith* : and then 'twill be no wonder if this ſucceſs animate, and give them not only confidence, but vanity to avow what is thus creditable.

and diſbeliev'd by many.

9. Indeed Satan is too ſubtle a manager to loſe this advantage, and the event ſadly ſhews, he has not neglected to improve it, as appears not only by the number of ſuch pretenders unto Reaſon, but even by their advancing to higher degrees. The *voluptuary*, who *likes* his portion in this world, and fears that in another, is at firſt only prompted by his intereſt to quarrel with the *laſt Article* of the *Creed*, and ſo in his own defence denies the *life everlaſting* : But when he finds his neceſſity made a vertue, and himſelf ſtruck into the repute of a Wit, upon that account he doubts not, his fame will encreaſe with his irreligion, and ſo proceeds ſtill to unravel farther, till at laſt he leaves not ſo much as *I believe in God* : That many have advanc'd ſo far is too evident, and by ſome ſo own'd, that they will not thank his Charity, that ſhall hope better of them.

Atheiſm gets ground of Religion.

10. 'Twas once the *triumph* of infant Chriſtianity, that it ſilenc'd all the *Heathen Oracles*, and within a while demoliſh'd even the *Synagogue* too: But alas, its mature age gives us that effect in a moſt inverted ſenſe, it now has ſerv'd to ſuppreſs even the common notions of a *Deity*, turn'd out the *one* as well as the *many* Gods, and inſtead of *Polytheiſts* and *Idolaters*, has made *Atheiſts*; and *that* which Chriſt tells us was deſign'd *to perfect and fill up the Law*, has by the ſtrange pravity of its profeſſors at once obliterated both *Law* and *Law-giver* out of mens minds, thereby exemplifying the old Axiom, *Corruptio optimi eſt peſſima*; and the *Saint* as well as the *Angel*, if he deſert his innocence, commences Fiend and *Devil*. Theſe are ſuch ſad, ſuch direful tranſmutations, as excite not ſo much wonder, as grief and lamentation; and what Rivers, what Oceans of tears are competent to bewail ſuch unutterable evils?

Removal of the Goſpel to be fear'd thereupon.

11. The removal of the *Candleſtick* is ſo formidable a *judgment*, that the threatning of it, is us'd by Chriſt as the moſt awakening menace to the Seven Churches, *Revel.* 2. 3. but the removing it by our own hands is yet an enhanſement of that higheſt calamity; when men are come to ſuch an inſenſate obduration, that they court their *Plagues*, become their own *Lictors*, and make that their *choice* which is their extremeſt *puniſhment*, they are certainly too ſecure of that ruine they call for: and may we not fear it may prove *general*, and involve us all? That while ſo many cry out to be deliver'd from their Chriſtianity as their load and preſſure, and ſo few expreſs their diſſent to that demand, God may in judgment grant it, hearken to thoſe that cry loudeſt, reſcue his Goſpel from our profane and impious violations, and give it to others that may bring forth the fruits of it.

12. Nor is this to be fear'd only from the explicit *importunities* of the blaſphemous, for it is *interpretatively* the vote of many others; whoever give themſelves up to the dominion of any luſt, do *implicitly* renounce their obedience to Chriſt, and ſay, *we will not have this man to rule over us.* And when he is thus depos'd from his *regal* and directive power, we have reaſon to believe he will deſpiſe a meer *titular* ſoveraignty, nor ſuffer the Scepter of his Word to remain as an Empty *Ceremony* among thoſe, who pay it no real obedience: nor be again cloath'd with Purple, crown'd and ſaluted King, to advance the triumph of his ſcorn and crucifixion.

Our Hypocriſie may haſten it.

13. Nor will the fawning Profeſſions of the demure hypocrite *avert*, but *accelerate* this Fate: He that makes the *Golden Scepter* in Chriſt's hand a *rod of Iron* in his own, that thinks his *Saintſhip* licences him to all the ſevere cenſures, and the yet ſeverer (becauſe more effective) *oppreſſions* of others, he is certainly to be lookt on not only as a Rebel, but an Uſurper too, and is of all others the higheſt provoker. He that *tramples* under foot the Son of God, does not ſo much violate him, as he that *pretends* to erect him a Throne upon blood and rapine, on perjury and ſacrilege: Nor does he that accounts the Blood of the *Covenant* an *unholy* thing ſo much prophane it, as he that uſes it as a *Varniſh* to paint over his fouleſt luſts. The Apoſtle has long ſince told us, *There is no concord between Chriſt and Belial*, and can we think he will be patient thus to be made ſubſervient to his enemy? Or ſuffer his *Ark* to be ſet for the *ſupport*, which ſhould be the *confuſion* of *Dagon*? Do we find him ſo ſeverely upbraid the hypocriſie of the *Jews*, that *ſtole, murdered, committed adultery, and ſwore falſly, and yet came and ſtood before him in his houſe? Jer.* 7. 9. And ſhall we hope he will connive at it in Chriſtians? Was it intolerable profanation in them to account his houſe a den of robbers, and ſhall we be permitted to *make* it ſo? They are ſent to *Shiloh* to read their own deſtiny, and ſurely we are as likely to find

ours there too; to be depriv'd of thoſe advantages which we have ſo unworthily us'd: Nor can we expect, that though God cauſe the natural *Sun to riſe ſtill as well on the evil as the good*, yet that the *Sun of righteouſneſs* ſhall continue to ſhine on thoſe who will only bask themſelves in his Rays, grow *Æthiops* from his *neighbourhood*, but will not work by his *light*.

God's patience provok'd by theſe ſins.

14. When all this is conſider'd, what a ſad abode does it make? When the *blaſphemies* of the Profane, the *ſenſualities* of the Voluptuous, and the *mockeries* of the Hypocrite, ſend, as it were, daily Challenges to Heaven, we cannot but look it ſhould at laſt *overcome* its long-ſuffering, *awake* God to vindicate the honour of his Name, and not ſuffer it any longer to be thus proſtituted and polluted: That when he ſees his Light ſerve only to aid us the more ſubtilly to contrive our deeds of darkneſs, he ſhould withdraw it, ſmite us with blindneſs like the *Sodomites*, whom he finds in ſuch impure purſuits: And were that *blindneſs* ſuch as our Saviour ſpeaks of, *Joh.* 9. 41. That inferr'd the *no ſin*, 'twere a deſirable infliction, but alas, it has none of that property? That which is deſign'd for the puniſhment can never be the extenuation of our guilt; but as in Hell there is an unhappy Separation of *effects*, the ſcorching of the *flame* without the light, and the blackneſs of *night* without the reſt: So in this neareſt approach to it, this Portal of thoſe Chambers of death, there is the ignorance without the excuſe, the darkneſs diveſted of its native quality of hiding: And when we are entred among *Heathens* here, we muſt yet expect the ſadder portion of *Apoſtatiz'd* Chriſtians hereafter.

Which Repentance only can appeaſe.

15. And O that this *conſideration* might at laſt have its proper *operation*, rouſe and awake us timely to prevent thoſe evils which it will be impoſſible to cure. That by bringing forth ſome more *genuine* and kindly fruits, we may avert that *diſmal* ſentence, *Cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground?* That men would generally lay to heart both the *ſin* and infamy of being *promoters of publick ruine*; and quench that *fire* with their tears which their ſins have kindled, that the faſting and prayers, the ſighs and groans of the *Primitive* Chriſtians may ſupplant the profane luxuries, the carnal jollities of the *Modern*. And that Sackcloth and Aſhes may become the *univerſal mode*, the only *faſhionable* dreſs among us. *This* both Reaſon and Religion ſuggeſt as matter of our moſt importunate wiſhes; would God our hopes were but half as pregnant.

Every man to amend one;

16. But the *leſs appearance* there is of this univerſal reformation, with the *more jealouſy* ought every ſingle perſon to look on himſelf, leſt he be one that obſtructs it: For ſo he does who ſtays till it be a *faſhion*, but neglects to contribute his part to the making it ſo. Men are willing to diſcourage themſelves from attempts of this kind, and with an unſeaſonable modeſty can reflect what a nothing one man is to ſo many millions, when alas, all that vaſt Empire Vice has got in the world, is founded on the pravity of ſingle perſons, and would certainly be ruin'd by their reformation. The more reaſonable Collection would be, that he that conſiders himſelf but as *one*, ſhould not ſuffer himſelf to grow into *leſs*; to fall from that *Unite* to a *Cypher*, by permitting ſloth or cowardice to enfeeble and emaſculate him: But on the contrary, ſhould recollect his ſpirits, actuate all his ſtrength, and therefore be ſure to do his utmoſt, becauſe that *utmoſt* is but a *little*.

and take part with Religion.

17. And to this certainly there want not encouragements. We ſee in common affairs the wonders that induſtry and reſolution are able to effect, and a *ſingle* courage being exerted, has often without *Romance*, overcome *giantly* difficulties. 'Tis a great prejudice is caſt upon Vertue by the puſillanimity of thoſe that *like*, but dare not *abet* her. When moſt men com-

mit all impieties daringly, and openly, and thoſe few that do mourn for it, do it but in ſecret, the example of the *one* is contagious, but the *other* has no means to diffuſe it ſelf. Would men ſtoutly own duty, and not like *Peter, follow Chriſt afar off*, they might yet hope to make a party and *gain ground* in the world. And how noble an attempt were this, thus to encounter Satan in his higheſt triumph, and recover a *loſt Field?* And methinks thoſe who have any *warmth* of Piety glowing within, may eaſily thus improve it into a *flame*, ἐπιχορηγῆσαι ἐν τῇ πίστει τὴν ἀρετὴν, *add to their faith vertue*, as that ſignifies *courage*: and then readily would ſucceed that train of Chriſtian excellencies reckon'd up by S. *Peter*, 2 *Epiſt.* 1. 5. *knowledge*, *temperance*, *patience*, *godlineſs*, and ſuperſtruct on theſe, as it there follows, *brotherly kindneſs*, and the moſt comprehenſive *charity*. We ſhould be not only devout towards *God*, but zealous towards *Men*, endeavouring by all prudent means to recover them out of thoſe of the Devil, whereby they are taken captive. And ſince among all thoſe ſnares there is none more entangling, than the creditableneſs and repute of cuſtomary vices, to ſet themſelves eſpecially againſt that overgrown covering and ornament; thoſe *Locks* wherein its great, its *Sampſon-like ſtrength* lies: And ſtrive to render it as condemn'd as it is baſe: And to this purpoſe nothing is ſo apt, as the exalting its competitor, fetching vertue out of the Dungeon, that darkneſs and obſcurity wherein it has long lain forgotten, and by making it illuſtriouſly viſible in their *own* practice, put it into the poſſibility of attracting *others*. Indeed there only it appears in its true ſplendor, they are but dead colours the ſublimeſt ſpeculation can put on it, he that would draw it to the life, muſt imprint it upon his own. And thus every pious perſon may, nay ought, to be a *Noah*, a Preacher of righteouſneſs: and if it be his fortune to have as imperſwaſible an Auditory, if he cannot avert the *deluge*, it will yet be the providing himſelf an *Ark*, the delivering, yea, advancing his *own ſoul*, if he cannot benefit *other mens*.

And interceed with God on its behalf.

18. Nay, this being a *Noah* may qualifie him to be a *Moſes* too, give him ſuch an *intereſt* with Heaven, that he may be fit to ſtand in the gap to be an *interceſſor* and Mediator for a provoking people. And God knows, never any generation more needed that *office*: nor any part of this more than our ſinful Nation, which having long been in the *furnace*, is indeed now come out, but ſo unpurified, that we have all reaſon to expect a return; and that not upon the former fruſtrated deſign of *refining*, but upon that more infallible and fatal one of *conſuming* us. This is ſo dreadful, but withal ſo juſt an expectation, that if there be any *Jacobs* among us; any, *who can wreſtle and prevail with God*, there never was ſo preſſing need of their interceſſion. O let all that are thus fitted for it, vigorouſly undertake this pious work; let no *Moſes*'s hands ever wax heavy, but be always held up in a devout importunity; let them tranſcribe that holy Oratory, which he ſo often effectually uſed, plead to God his own cauſe, with a *What wilt thou do to thy great Name?* And when there is nothing in us that can pretend to any thing but vengeance, ranſack God's *boſom*, rifle his *bowels* for arguments of *compaſſion*, repeat to him his own *titles*, that he is *long-ſuffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin, Numb.* 14. 18. And by theſe ſollicit, yea, conjure him to pity. And how great an ardency is required to this interceſſion? What *ſtrong* cries muſt they be that ſhall drown ſo *loud* a clamour of impieties? And how does it reproach the ſlightneſs of our ſleepy heartleſs addreſſes? Can we hope to bind God's hands with Withes and Straws? To arreſt his vengeance with ſuch faint and feeble aſſaults? And when *nature* and *danger* ſuggeſt to Heathen *Nine-*

veh, not *only* to cry, but cry *mightily* to God; ſhall the ſuperaddition of our Religion damp ours into a *whiſper*, a ſoft *unaudible* ſound? A ſtorm will teach the profane Mariner to pray in earneſt, and alas! we have not wanted that diſcipline. 'Tis not long ſince we might have ſaid with thoſe, *Acts* 27. *No ſmall tempeſt has long lain on us, neither Sun nor Stars in many days*, nay, in many *years, appearing*, nothing but black and diſmal portents of a final *wreck* to a poor *weather-beaten Church*, and then ſure 'twas time to be importunate, to learn ſo much of inſtruction from the waves that toſſed us, as to make our prayers keep pace with them, in ſwift uninterrupted ſucceſſion, in loud and not to be reſiſted violence. That we did ſo *then* I dare not affirm, but ſure I am the neceſſity of it is not *yet* out-dated; for though the Sky however black with clouds carry no thunder in it; though the imperious winds that blow from every quarter, ſhould not break out in tempeſt, and bring ſhipwrack to us; yet we too fully exemplifie the truth of the *Prophets* Axiome, *That the wicked are like the troubled Sea, that cannot reſt*: We have *within* us a principle of ruin, which can operate, though nothing from *without* excite it. A tempeſt is not always neceſſary to ſink a Ship, one treacherous leak may do it in the greateſt calm, and what ſecurity can there then be to our torn Veſſel, whoſe rents our continued diviſions do ſtill keep open? Indeed our *preſervation* muſt be as our *reſtauration* was, the work of Omnipotence; thither therefore let us addreſs with S. *Peter's* pathetick Prayer, *Save, Lord, or we periſh.* O that all who are concerned in the grant of that Petition, would qualifie themſelves to preſent it; lift up ſuch pure hands, *That God who hears not ſinners, Joh.* 9. may yet hear them, afford a gracious Ear, and give an anſwer of *Peace*.

CHAP. III.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Inconſideration.

ſons the fore-going un-happineſs, and

1. THE laſt Section having defeated all the promiſing hopes of the former, by ſhewing us how ſadly we have fruſtrated all the deſigns and engagements of our profeſſion; enervated all thoſe apt and powerful methods, and how perfectly contrary our *practices* are to our *rules*, meer curioſity would more prompt us to enquire what are the hidden *cauſes* of thoſe ſo ſtrange *effects*; what unhappy propriety there is in the *ſoil*, that after ſo much *culture* and husbandry, it ſhould produce nothing but *wild* Grapes; and by what arts and wiles Satan has not only evaded, but even retorted thoſe blows which were aim'd at him. But as in *diſeaſes* the *pains* and languiſhing are obvious to the groſſeſt ſenſe, but the *ſprings* and originals of them moſt frequently lye deep, and are ſo complicated and interwoven, that they require much art to ſearch and to diſtinguiſh them: nay, do often mock the moſt ſubtil inquiſitor, and ſend him back with meer conjectures and uncertain gueſſes: So in this *Epidemick* Spiritual diſtemper, the *malady* is notorious and viſible, but the *cauſes* of it not ſo eaſily determined, yet that not ſo much from the darkneſs as the number of them; ſo many do pretend, and that with very good colour, to this unhappy, this monſtrous birth, that a *Solomon* himſelf muſt have made the propoſal of dividing it, as not being able to have aſſigned it entire to any one Mother.

2. Indeed ſo many are the concurrents towards it, that it would far exceed the limits of this little Tract, but to point at them: I ſhall not therefore

fore undertake any ſuch *exact* enumeration, but ſhall only take notice of thoſe which either for the generality or degree of their efficacy appear the moſt *eminent*.

Firſt of Inconſideration.

3. And firſt the great and ſtupid *Inconſideration* which moſt men have concerning their Religion, may well paſs for a main cauſe of its fruſtration. *Chriſtianity* may make *Archimedes* his *challenge*; give it but where it may ſet its foot; allow but a ſober advertence to its propoſals, and it will move the whole *world*: It comes with moſt invincible and controuling arguments, but ſtill they are arguments, and thoſe muſt firſt obtain *attention*, before they can force *aſſent*; they will moſt infallibly weigh down the *ſcales*, tho the whole world were the *counter-balance*; but then that muſt pre-ſuppoſe their being put into thoſe Scales; their being entertain'd with ſo much deliberation, as may try and examine their weight. In a word, they addreſs to us as men, that is, *creatures* endued by God with *rational* Souls and diſcurſive faculties; but if we will ſuppreſs theſe, and ſet up only the *brute* to give audience, we muſt not expect *Balaam*'s prodigy ſhould be every day repeated, that the *beaſt* ſhould be wiſer than the *rider*, and conſequently cannot wonder if the Succeſs vary with the Auditors.

Religion taken up upon truſt.

4. And 'tis to be fear'd, that this is the ſtate of moſt of us, that all the convincing *Logick*, that *demonſtration of the Spirit*, as S. *Paul* calls it, and all the perſwaſive *Rhetorick* of the Goſpel, find us ſo ſtupid and unconcern'd, that they can make no impreſſion: All the *avenues* are ſo blockt up, that they can find no way of approaching us. We are like the *Indian* Serpents *Philoſtratus* mentions, proof againſt all charms, but ſuch as with their glittering ſplendor aſſault our Eyes: Nothing moves us but what courts our Senſes, and what is not *groſs enough* to be ſeen, we think *too nice* to be conſidered. The form and name of Chriſtianity men find ready to their hands, and it coſts them no labour to put it on: But ſhould they be interrogated of the import and ſignificancy of it, I fear many would be at a loſs what to anſwer. Men call themſelves *Chriſtians* as they do *French* or *Engliſh*, only becauſe they were born within ſuch a Territory, take up their *Religion* as a part of their *fate*, the temper of their *Climate*, the entail of their *Anceſtors*, or any thing moſt remote from their choice; the profeſſion of it deſcends to them by way of inheritance, and like young careleſs Heirs, they never are at the charge to ſurvey it, to inform themſelves either of the Iſſues or Revenues of it; what burdens it lays, or what advantages it promiſes. Every man ſees they are vaſt multitudes that have entered the *Baptiſmal* vow, and I fear no ſmall numbers of them, that weigh it as little when they ſhould *perform* it, as they did when they *made* it; have no other notion of *Baptiſm*, but as a *cuſtom* of the place, or a *time* of feſtivity: Conſider no farther ſignificancy in theſe ſpiritual bands, than they do in the Swaddling-cloaths of their Infancy, and can give no better account why they took on them *Chriſt*'s *livery*, than why they wear ſuch *garments* as the *common faſhion* of their Country preſcribes them.

Peoples Ignorance proceeds from want of pious Education in ſome;

5. This is in many the effect of groſs ignorance, that really know nothing that borders upon Religion: And where that is the *principle*, we cannot think it ſtrange to ſee their *practices* proportionable; this returns them into the ſtate of *Heatheniſm*, and while they walk in that darkneſs, it is no wonder if they often fall: The only matter of admiration is, that there ſhould be any ſuch darkneſs among us; that *the glorious light*, as S. *Paul* terms it, *of the Goſpel of Chriſt*, ſhould not long e're this have diſpelled it out of our *Horizon*, and certainly, that it has not, muſt be owing to ſome very great guilt, ſo that concerning ſuch perſons the Diſciples queſtion, *Joh.* 9.

is very pertinent, *Who did ſin, this man or his Parents?* Where men are ſo ignorant, it muſt neceſſarily infer their *Parents* negligence in infuſing, or their *own* ſtubborn perverſeneſs in reſiſting inſtruction: But 'tis more probable to conclude the former; ſince if Children were early inſtituted, knowledge would inſenſibly inſinuate it ſelf, before their years had arm'd them with obſtinacy enough to make head againſt it: But when by the Parents remiſſneſs the proper Seeds-time is loſt, the ſoil grows ſtiff and untractable; the *labour* of learning averts their Childhood, and the *ſhame* of it their Manhood, and ſo they grow old in their ignorance, are ready to *leave* this world before they come to *know* any thing of that which is to ſucceed it. This is a *common*, but certainly, a moſt *deplorable* caſe; and as it loudly accuſes thoſe Parents, who thus wretchedly hazard their Childrens greateſt concernments, ſo certainly it reflects not very laudably upon thoſe, who by ſlighting that excellent Order of *Confirmation* in this Church, have beſides all other advantages of it, robb'd them of that happy reſerve, which the care of their *Spiritual* Parent had provided to repair the negligence of their *Natural*; but guilt has a miſerable kind of infinity, and leſſens not by being communicated; and therefore though theſe unknowing perſons may with juſtice enough *accuſe* others, yet can they never the more *abſolve* themſelves. Indeed they cannot tax others omiſſions towards them, without a tacit reproach of their own: For if it were a fault in the *Parent*, to let their infancy want thoſe neceſſary infuſions, 'tis ſurely ſo in *themſelves* to let their riper years continue in that deſtitution. And ſure 'tis not probable there could be a more irrational motive to the *former*, than that which prevails with the *latter*, to wit, the fear of ſhame, which certainly much more properly belongs to him that lies ſtupidly under his want, than he that induſtriouſly ſets to cure it: So that while they go thus prepoſterouſly to avert reproach, they invite it; nay, and do beſides betray one of their moſt important ſecrets, diſcover themſelves more ſollicitous about *appearances* than *realities*; to be *thought* knowing than to *be* ſo. A ſtrange kind of *ſpeculative* Hypocriſie, which yet leads to all the *practical* profaneneſs incident to thoſe, *who live without God in the world*.

and perſonal ſloth and negligence in others;

6. But would God the uncatechiz'd were the only perſons we had to complain of in this matter: There is another ſort as *ignorant*, who have not that plea; who by a wretched *Inconſideration*, have made a ſhift to *unlearn* what they had once been *taught*. That this is naturally very poſſible no man can queſtion, that obſerves how *deſuetude* will rob a man of any Science or rather habit. But in this caſe there is yet a farther concurrent towards it; Chriſt's Parable tells us of *Fowls that devoured the Seed*, which himſelf interprets to be the *wicked one*, which catched away the word ſown in mens hearts: When that ſpiritual ſeed lies looſe and ſcatter'd upon the ſurface, and is not by deep and ſerious meditation harrowed, as it were, into the ground, it offers it ſelf a ready prey to the devourer, and God knows the *event* is too ready to atteſt the *truth* of the obſervation: For do we not ſee *many* whoſe childhoods have wanted nothing of Chriſtian nurture, that have had all advantages to the making them *wiſe unto ſalvation*, yet ſuffer their manhood to wear out and obliterate all thoſe *rudiments* of their youth; and that not only out of their *practice*, but even out of their *memory* too; This (would we be patient to have the Experiment made) would, I doubt not, be found true in divers, and they would appear leſs able to approve themſelves, not only to the *Confeſſor*, but even to the *Catechiſt* in their *adult age*, than they were in their *Minority*; as having ſcarce ever thought of the principles of their Religion, ſince they conn'd

them to avoid correction; and then 'tis no wonder if they paſs into the ſame *forgetfulneſs* with other the occurrences of that *ſlippery* Age.

and want of making a particular application of the Articles of our Creed.

7. But if with ſome the *memory* have been ſo invincibly faithful, as not to have reſign'd its *depoſitum*; if it do happen obſtinately to retain thoſe early impreſſions which were made on it; yet alas! that alone will be of little avail: 'Tis true, That is the ſtore-houſe, and 'tis good to have that well repleniſht; but if its *plenty* be only within it ſelf, uncommunicated; if the *granary*, though never ſo full, be ſeal'd up, it gives no ſecurity againſt a *famine*: A man's remembrance of his *Creed* may tell him there is a *God*, and that he is Almighty; but if his Reaſon be ſo much aſleep, as not to infer from thence the neceſſity of reverencing and obeying him who is all-powerful to revenge our contempts, he may repeat the *Article* every day, and yet nevertheleſs *Atheiſtically*. In like manner he may go on to the Birth, Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt; but if he weigh not the obligations to gratitude and duty, which devolve on him from thence, he may remember his *Birth*, and yet never be *regenerate*: His *Death*, and yet not *die to ſin*; and his *Reſurrection*, and yet *lie rotting* in his own *corruption*, and not riſe with him to *newneſs of life*. So he may proceed to his *coming to judge the quick and the dead*: but if he reflect not on his own particular concernment in it; if he conſider not that *for every the ſecreteſt thing*, Eccl. 11. *God will bring him*, as well as others, *to judgment*; he may talk of *Dooms-day* as men do of ſuch *Aſſizes* as they have no Tryal at, but it will never ſet him a trembling, or give him the providence to anticipate his ſentence; ſo judge himſelf here, that he may not be judged of the Lord. And ſo proportionably in all the parts of our Chriſtian Faith: He that does not extract from them their proper and juſt inferences, ſhall never feel their efficacy. He has indeed in that excellent *Syſteme*, a moſt infallible *Catholicon*, againſt all his ſpiritual Maladies; but 'tis a Medicine, not a Charm; to be taken, not laid by him; and if he fail in *application*, he will as certainly miſs of the *cure*: And this gives us one too clear a reaſon, why *ſo many*, in the moſt fatal ſence, *are ſick and weak among us, and faln aſleep*, are firſt *lethargick*, and then ſtark *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*. Men do not by ſober conſideration ſuck out the vertue which would heal them: they look on the Creed as *Chriſt*'s *badge*, and ſo long as they bear that, they think none muſt queſtion their *Chriſtainity*: Whereas 'tis indeed more properly his Military *Symbolum*, or recognition of the Cauſe, and General they fight for; an engaging them to all the obedience, fidelity and conſtancy of reſolute Souldiers: And to this purpoſe it is that we *ſtand up* at the recital of the Creed, as owning our Baptiſmal promiſe, to *fight* manfully under our Saviour's *Banner* againſt *Sin*, the *World*, and the *Devil*; and if we do not thus, it is not material what profeſſions we make, we are the ſame deſerters whether we *ſtay* in our own Camp, or *run* over to the Enemies; *throw away* our Arms, or *not uſe* them; *renounce* our Chriſtian Faith, or not *improve* it. Sloth is as miſchievous in War as treachery or cowardize, and he that keeps his *ſword* in the *ſheath*, is as unformidable an enemy, as he that brings *none* into the *field*.

Chriſtians grown too careleſs and ſecure.

8. And how many ſuch inſignificant *Combatants* are there in the Chriſtian Camp, that only lend their *Names* to fill up the *Muſter-roll*, but never dream of going upon *ſervice*? 'Tis certain there are as many ſuch, as there are careleſs unconſidering Profeſſors: And theſe, 'tis to be feared, make ſo great a number, that were the Church put to eſtimate her *forces*, and examine what effectively her *ſtrength* is, ſhe would find the deceit

of *falſe muſters* as great among the *Spiritual* as the *Civil* Souldiery. It is indeed a moſt amazing thing to ſee, That that which is the one great and important intereſt of all men, ſhould of all other things meet with the leaſt regard. If we make a propoſal of worldly profit, though incumber'd with many difficulties, and liable to many uncertainties, we ſhall not only have an attentive hearing, but active care and diligent purſuit of the deſign; it will be driven to the laſt glimpſe of hope; and if the firſt attempt miſcarry, the next occaſion is laid hold of; but here, where the *prize* is ſo rich, the *conditions* ſo eaſie, the *acquiſt* ſo certain, yet (as if theſe were deterring, averting qualities) we cannot be got to take the matter into our deliberation. Alas, What ſtupid folly has poſſeſt men? And by what *meaſures* do they make their *eſtimates*? How are their precious Souls become ſo vile in their eyes, that they are the only part of them, which they think below their regard? In an *Epidemick* diſeaſe every man looks out for an *Antidote* or Medicine for his own peculiar, and does not acquieſce in that ſilly confidence that he ſhall do as well as other men: Yet in this greater danger, that is their avowed comfort, and keeps them as chearful as if they had the moſt ſolid grounds of ſecurity. Alas, can numbers *out-face* damnation? or do men hope that by going in troops to Hell they ſhall *maſter* the native inhabitants, *ſubdue* thoſe legions of Tormentors, and become *conquerors* inſtead of *ſufferers*? This is ſure too wild an imagination for any to entertain, yet what more ſober one can any pretend, in favour of ſo ſtupendous an improvidence?

ought to conſider their danger.

9. But 'twill be much more ſeaſonable to *reform* than *Apologize* or *Rhetoricate*; and therefore 'twill import thoſe men, who like the inhabitants of *Laiſh*, dwell *careleſs*, quiet and ſecure, to look about them; to enter into *ſerious* conſultation how they may avert that ruine which waits upon ſuch a ſupine temper; not to ſuffer themſelves to periſh in the midſt of ſuch poſſibilities, nay, ſollicitations to be ſaved; but at laſt afford an audience to that Embaſſie which is ſent them from Heaven. Ponder well thoſe *eaſie* terms of reconciliation which are propoſed: The *ineſtimable advantages* conſequent to the embracing that amity; and the as *ineſtimable detriment* of refuſing it: In a word, not to pleaſe themſelves with the *empty title*, but to penetrate the *full purport* and ſignificancy of their Chriſtianity; and when they have done this ſoberly and attentively, having removed this firſt and moſt general obſtruction to piety, they will find themſelves aſſaulted by ſuch force of *reaſon*, that they muſt either be very ill *Logicians*, or very good *Chriſtians*.

CHAP. IV.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Partial Conſideration.

Partial conſideration.

1. NExt to the *ſtupid* and merely vegetable ſtate of total incogitancy, we may rank that *partial* and piece-meal conſideration, by which Chriſtianity is mutilated and deformed, deprived of all its force to attract and ſubdue mens hearts: for as in *artificial* Movements, there is ſuch a dependence of one part upon another, that the ſubſtracting of any one deſtroys the whole frame: So in this *ſpiritual* Machine deſigned to raiſe our dull mortality to Heaven, the divine wiſdom of its maker has combined its ſeveral parts, that he who ſevers, ruines; he that applies it not in its united ſtrength, will find no aid from its unjoynted ſcattered particles. *S. Paul*

tells us, 1 *Cor.* 12. That in the natural body, the making it all Eye, or Hand, the reducing the many members to one, is deſtructive to its being: (if they were all one member where were the body, *verſe* 20.) and we in reaſon muſt expect the ſame event will follow here. If we advance one part of our Chriſtian Faith to the annihilation of the reſt, it is impoſſible that ſhould ſupply the place of the whole; but the more that member is ſwoln above its native ſize, the more *unwieldy*, not the more *ſtrong* it grows; and loſes that active vigor, which is received by a ſocial communication with the other parts.

Touching the Promiſes of God.

2. 'Tis God's charge againſt the *Prieſts*, *Mal.* 2. That *they have been partial in the law*, נשאים פנים lifters up of faces in it; preferr'd *ſome* more agreeable parts, and diſcountenanc'd others; were not only judges of the Law, but *unjuſt* Judges too. And I fear the Indictment may now run more generally againſt the people alſo; That they have been partial in the Goſpel; cull'd and choſen out thoſe ſofter and more gentle dictates which ſhould leſs grate and diſturb them: Like well the *Oyl* that makes them have a chearful countenance, but are not ſo forward to deal with the *Wine* which ſhould ſearch and cleanſe their ſores. We make all our addreſſes to the promiſes, hug and careſs them, and in the interim, let the *commands* ſtand by neglected. A *divinity* indeed fitly apportioned to the devotion of *theſe times*, which loves to make an *offering to God of that which coſts them nothing*, and yields a preference to that way of *worſhip* which aſſures Salvation *beſt cheap*, and at the *eaſieſt terms*; but would men conſider, they would find, That the *Commands* are the ſupreme and moſt eminent part of the *Evangelical Covenant*, the *promiſes* come but as *handmaids* and attendants: An honourable retinue to invite the more reſpectful entertainment, and it ſhould be remembred that of this ſort are the *threatnings* too; and therefore they have ſurely an equal right to our regard, eſpecially when many of them have the acceſſion of God's *Oath* to bind and ſtrengthen their *performance*. And what a ſcandalous and abſurd partiality is this, that when the Precepts come with this ſolemnity, the more to command our reverence, we ſingle out this one part of the Train, and pay our homage unto it; lay hold on the promiſes, not thoſe that ſpeak *damnation* to impenitence, but the other half of them which give *aſſurances* of favour. And like the *Benjamites* to the daughters of *Shiloh*, run away with them, poſſeſs our ſelves of theſe by rape, in ſpight of all the incapacities we lye under; though God has ſworn, that no diſobedient provoker ſhall enter into his reſt.

Encourageth to preſume on God's goodneſs.

3. That this is really the caſe of many is more than probable; for by what other artifice is it poſſible for them to reconcile their large hopes, with their no purifying; their confident expectations of Heaven, with their greedy rapacious purſuits of Earth; their ſecure dependance on the Blood of their *Saviour*, with their remorſeleſs effuſions of that of their *Brethren*? Did they conſider the inſeparable *connexion* between the Precepts and the Promiſes, 'twere hard for them to be ſo wicked, but impoſſible to be ſo ſanguine. Did the *unclean* perſon believe that none but *the pure in heart ſhall ſee God*, if he could be ſo much *Swine*, as ſtill to chuſe the *mire*; yet ſure he could not expect to be wrapt from thence into Heaven. Did the *Drunkard* conſider the ſentence of the Apoſtle, *excluding all ſuch from the Kingdom of God*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 10. If he can be content ſo ſadly to overbuy this ſin; as to pay that Kingdom for his ſhot; yet certainly even he cannot be Sot enough to expect the poſſeſſion of what he has ſo ſold, or hope that from one of his drunken *trances*, he ſhall *awake* to *glory*. Did the *Covetous*

extortioner obſerve that he is involv'd in the ſame ſentence, remember that ſuch Violents *ſhall take*, not *heaven*, but *hell by force*; if the terrors of the Lord could not have force enough to melt his bowels, to unclutch his griping hand, or diſſeize him of his prey: Yet ſure it muſt diſcourage him from graſping of Heaven too, from hoping to defraud *God* as he has done *men*, and ſtriking himſelf into an eſtate in the land of the living: And in like manner all other hoping ſinners if they would ruine, yet muſt ceaſe from flattering themſelves, muſt chuſe *damnation* bare-fac'd, and not fancy that their poſting on in the broad way ſhall ever bring them to *life*. And ſure this diſcovery of their eſtate, were a very good ſtep to the curing it: For tho 'tis poſſible ſome few may be of ſo *ſturdy* an impiety, as to chuſe their *ſin* with all its conſequents; yet ſure all ſinners are not of that ſtrong complexion, and therefore *Satan* is put to his wiles and artifices, is fain too *hoodwink* thoſe that are apt to *ſtart*; and diſguiſes the danger when he ſees the true appearance of it will terrifie and avert. This was his *old* policy with our *firſt* Parents; he dazles their eyes with the *glorious*, but *abuſive* propoſal of becoming like *Gods*, that they might not diſcern how near they were approaching to become like *Devils*: And this under the pretence of confidence and friendſhip, diſcovering, as it were, a ſecret to them, that God envied them that promotion, which his greater kindneſs was ſollicitous to procure for them. And as if the ruine of mankind, in *Maſſa*, had been too ſlight a *Trophy* for that one ſtratagem, he repeats it again to the individuals, perſwades men that the path of obedience which God has chalkt out is ſtreight, and narrow, rugged and incumbred; That there is a ſhorter cut, an eaſier paſſage to life: That they may be led into *Canaan* a nearer way, ſtep into it immediately from the fleſh-pots of *Egypt*, and ſcape the tedious weary March in the Wilderneſs: never ſo much as call at Mount *Sinai*, or be affrighted with the *Thunders of the Law*. In a word, they need not *work out their Salvation*, but be they never ſo ſlothful, *they may inherit the Promiſes*, *Heb.* 6. 12. This is his own grand *Concluſion*, though he has ſeveral *mediums* to infer it by: Wherewith as with ſo many *tools* and Engines he furniſhes men for the filling or breaking of that ſacred link between duty and reward; and of theſe he has great variety fitted to the hands, and skill of thoſe that manage them. I ſhall not undertake to ranſack his *work-houſe*, or give an inventory of his *Utenſils*, but ſhall rather in general beſeech all thoſe who have made this unhappy ſeparation, to remember from whoſe *Forge* they took their *Inſtruments*; and then conſider whether his officiouſneſs in ſupplying them, can argue any thing but that it is his work they are about. Can any think that he, whoſe eternal paſtime it will be to torment men, can really be ſollicitous of their eaſe; that he would chuſe out for them the *pleaſanteſt paths*, were it not that he knows they lead to the *chambers of death*? When *Chriſt*, whoſe ſole buſineſs it was to ſave mens Souls, has preſcribed us a *courſe* which ſhall aſſuredly conduct us unto *happineſs*, what can it be but frenzy to reſort to *Abaddon*, the deſtroyer, for an eaſier *method*, or expect more *gentleneſs* and compaſſion from the *roaring Lion* than from the *Lamb of God*?

4. Nay indeed this is not only to attribute to him more tenderneſs, but fidelity too: To believe him in oppoſition to all the expreſs affirmations of God; and when he who is truth it ſelf has told us, That *except we repent we ſhall all periſh*, *Luke* 13. 6. and that *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord*, *Heb.* 12. 14. to disbelieve this only upon his bare credit, who was a lyar from the beginning: This indeed is a prodigious compoſition of blaſphemy and folly; a ſtrange contumely to *God*, but fatal treachery to our

and doubt of his faithfulneſs

ſelves: For alas! Satan entertains us all this while but with a trick of *Legerdemain*, and as *Jugglers* make us believe we have cut the *ſtring*, which yet preſently after they ſhew us *whole*; ſo he perſwades us he has thus ſever'd the *Condition* from the *Promiſes*, when to our grief it will finally appear their union was *inviolable*. 'Tis not all our vain confidence that can reverſe the immutable divine Law; we may, 'tis true, delude our ſelves, keep up our ſpirits high; in a ſecure jollity *eat and drink, and riſe up to play*, and ſo not only loyter, but revel out our *day*, till the *night* overtake us *wherein no man can work*; but we ſhall never be able to propagate the deceit, where only it could avail us; to perſwade God to pay the *hire* to thoſe that have been no labourers, or give the *prize* to any who have not run to obtain it. Let every man therefore in a juſt tenderneſs to his own Soul, ſtrictly examine his hopes; try, not how *high* they towre, but how *deep* they are founded; whether on the *ſand* or on the *rock*; the flattering deluſions of Satan, and the dreams of his own Fancy, or on the Promiſes of God: For though all pretend to build on the latter, yet God knows, a multitude of fooliſh *Architects* there are, which miſtake their ground, take that for aſſurance that is not: And this truly is a thing deſerves to be ſoberly conſider'd; they that moſt greedily catch at the Promiſes, do often embrace a *cloud* inſtead of the *Deity*, which they ſo eagerly graſp, and thereby think to enjoy. But *faithful* obedience, and not *inſolent* hopes commend us unto God. The Goſpel indeed deſcribes to us great and ineſtimable *felicities*; but he that can think this gives him a *Title* to them, may as well pretend to the whole *World*, becauſe he has the *Map* of it in his houſe: For though it mentions them to all, yet it promiſes them to none but the obedient. And thoſe *Iſraelites* which fled from the ſight of *Goliah*, 1 *Sam.* 17. 25. might as reaſonably challenge the reward propoſed to the Victor, as men can pretend to enter into life without keeping the commandments: This then is the one *Criterion*, by which a man may judge of his hopes; if they be but proportionable to his obedience, they are then regular, and ſuch as will not make him aſham'd, but prove incentives and engagements to every good work. Let him obey as much as he can, and then he need not deny himſelf the comfort of hoping as much as he can too. But if his *hopes* exceed this meaſure, and ſquare themſelves only by his *wiſhes*; if he look for Heaven, not becauſe he is *qualified* for it, but becauſe he wants or *covets* it; this is rather to dream than hope, and ſuch *whimſies* will as ſoon inveſt the beggar in *wealth*, the defam'd in *honour*, the ſick in *health*, or any man in any thing he has but a mind to, as compaſs *Heaven* for the bold *Fiduciary*.

Folly to hope for Heaven while we be unqualified for it.

5. It is indeed like thoſe *Lunacies*, wherein mens fancies adopt them Heirs to thoſe Kingdoms they know nothing more of, than the names; and ſure the Analogy holds as well in the *cure* as the *diſeaſe*: Let theſe *Patients* a-while be kept dark, taken from the dazling contemplations of their imaginary priviledges, to the ſad reflection on their ſins: and as God expoſtulates with *Iſrael*, Ezek. 33. 26. *Ye ſtand upon the ſword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every man his neighbour's wife, and ſhall ye poſſeſs the land?* So let them recite to themſelves the Catalogues of their impieties, and then ask their own hearts, whether theſe be the qualifications of thoſe that ſhall reſt in Gods holy Hill; Whether theſe marks of the *Beaſt* can ever rank them among the followers of the *lamb?* And let theſe Conſiderations be preſt home, reiterated ſo often, till by repeated ſtrokes they have made good the other part of the method, made their Souls bleed, and by that Spiritual *Phlebotomy*, temper'd their ſwelling veins, allayed the over-ſanguineneſs

neſs of their conſtitution: And then there remains but one thing more to compleat the courſe, and that is, bringing them into the *Work-houſe*, ſetting them really to *work out* their *ſalvation with fear and trembling*, which they had ſo near played away by confidence and preſumption: And when they have done thus, they have verified their hopes, and then may ſafely re-aſſume them: They are return'd again with advantage to their firſt point, and are that in *ſoberneſs* and *reality*, which they then were only in *fiction* and *imagination*.

How to judge of ſound Doctrine.

6. And now would God men would once be content to be thus diſabus'd, that they would not be ſo in love with deceit, as in the Prophet's phraſe, *Jer.* 8. 5. to *hold it faſt*: That they would not chuſe *Chymæra's* and *fantaſtick* Images before *real* and *ſubſtantial* Felicities; and prefer that hope which will be ſure to *ſhipwrack* them, before that which will be *an Anchor of the Soul ſure and ſtedfaſt, Heb. 6. 19.* and if this ſo reaſonable a propoſal may be embrac'd; if the World ſhould, as the *Spaniard* ſaid, but *riſe wiſe one morning*, what a deal of dead Merchandize would Satan have put upon his hands? Many of thoſe they call the comfortable Doctrines would want vent, which are now the ſtaple commodity of his Kingdom. What thoſe are, 'tis no part of my deſign to examine, it will be every man's particular concern to do it for himſelf; which he may do by this one teſt, whether they more animate men to *hope* well, than to *live* well? Whether they bring *Alexander's* ſword to cut aſunder the *Gordion* knot, to ſever between the promiſe and the condition? Or the ſword of the *Spirit* to ſubdue all to the obedience of Chriſt? If the former, we may expect the fruits of ſuch will be all that licentiouſneſs which *S. Paul* deſcribes, as *the works of the fleſh, Gal.* 5. 19. it being not to be imagin'd, that the *Precepts* of the Goſpel, which they divide from the *Promiſes*, only that they might fall off, ſhall then be *voluntarily* taken up in meer good nature and heroick Generoſity; that thoſe who are ſo induſtrious to avoid the neceſſity of *Chriſtian practice*, will make it their *free-will-offering*. If there ſhould happen to be ſome few of ſo ingenuous a gratitude; yet 'tis certain, that is not our common mould; few men will be better than they think their Intereſt bids them be, and therefore ſuch principles are dangerous Seminaries of *Libertiniſm*: And 'tis mens very important concernment not to admit them. Let not then their chearful *aſpect* recommend them to our *embraces*; men may be kill'd with too much *Cordial*; that which ſeems to refreſh the *Spirits* may enflame the *Blood*, and though *cold poiſons* have gotten the fame of being the moſt *malignant*, yet there are *hot* that are as infallibly *mortiferous*. Let it be our care in oppoſition to both, to keep our ſelves in that moderate equal temper, which belongs to *healthy Souls*: And ſince that is the vitaleſt heat which is gotten by exerciſe, ſet to our buſineſs, employ our ſelves diligently in all thoſe duties the Goſpel exacts, and then we ſhall not want ſuch an hope as may warm our hearts, keep us in a chearful expectation, till we come to the glorious fruition of that *Eternal Salvation which God has promiſed to all them, and only them that obey him.* And till we do thus, till we conſider as well what we are to *do*, as what we are to *receive*, there will be no hope of reſtoring Chriſtianity to its native vigour: We ſhall make it evaporate all its ſtrength in *unſignificant hopes*, convert it into Air, to bear up our Bubbles, inſtead of that *firm ground*, whereon we ſhould build *vertue* here, and *glory* hereafter.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Carnal Conſideration.

Carnal Conſideration an Enemy to Religion.

1. AFter the diſadvantages of *Partial* Conſideration, may fairly be ſubjoyn'd the ills of that advertency, which is impregnated by *ſenſuality* and ſloth, and makes pretence unto right *reaſon*, but tends indeed as much as any thing to the fruſtrating the deſign, and enfeebling the force of our Religion: Such cloſe *reſerves* of deceit and malice have men to their own Souls, that when they quit *one* ſtrong hold of Satan's, 'tis only to retreat to *another*. When they are not ſo *brisk* and Aerial, as lightly to skip over thoſe precepts that lye in their way, they are ſo groſs and unwary as to fall at them, if they may not paſs for Straws and Chaff, ſuch as every blaſt of vain confidence may blow away, they ſhall then be improved into Heaps and Mountains, become ſtones of ſtumbling and rocks of offence, and when they are call'd upon to conſider them, they do it in ſo perverſe a manner, as if they meant to revenge themſelves on that unwelcome importunity: Their *conſideration* is worſe than *neglect*. They look into them inſidiouſly, not as *diſciples* but as *Spies*; not to weigh the obligingneſs, but to quarrel at the unreaſonableneſs or difficulty of the injunctions, not to direct their *practice*, but excuſe their *prevarications*.

Begets hard thoughts of God's commands.

2. From this unſincere kind of inſpection it is, that the *Precepts* have got ſo formidable appearance with many, that they have fallen under ſuch heavy prejudices, as to reſolve them intollerable yokes, inſuperable tasks: that this *Canaan* is a land that eats up its inhabitants, wherein there is ſo little of *enjoyment*, that it ſcarce affords a *being*. Men count a *life* under ſuch reſtraints, ſo joyleſs and uneaſie, that it differs from *death* only, by being more *paſſive*. They think *Zeal* like a *Hectick Fever*, in a ſlow, but certainly fatal *Fire*, exhauſts and conſumes the *Spirits*. Mortification and *ſelf-denial* macerate and decay the *body*; and *liberality* diſſipates and waſtes the *eſtate*: And with theſe Apparitions, which themſelves have conjur'd up, men run frighted from duty, reſolve the burden is inſupportable, or at leaſt grievous to be born, and therefore, as our Saviour ſays of the *Phariſees*, *will not touch it*, no not ſo much as *with one of their fingers*, *Mat.* 23. 4. never make any attempt to try what indeed they are, but take their meaſures from their own, or perhaps other mens prejudicate opinions, and thence take out an *Authentick record* and *Patent* for ſloth, fancy the journey too long for them, and therefore ſit ſtill; firſt call Chriſt's Commandments *grievous*, and then improve that ſlander into a *manumiſſion*; abſolve themſelves from obeying them. And unleſs they may have the Gate to life cut wider, made capacious enough to receive them with all their luſts about them, will never eſſay to enter it.

Inconveniences of a wicked life.

3. But if the *Prince of darkneſs* have enacted it a *Law*, that difficulty ſhall paſs for excuſe, yet if *real* uneaſineſs may be admitted to be as deterring as *imaginary* ones, his own decree will retort the moſt ruinouſly on himſelf, and men may plead it as their diſcharge from all thoſe baſe drudgeries, thoſe tyrannous impoſitions wherewith he loads them. The *Drunkard* may experimentally tell him the *pain* of an aching head, of an overcharged ſtomach, the *ruine* of a waſted Eſtate, and claim a diſpenſation from purſuing that uneaſie and coſtly ſin. The *wanton* may bring his macerated body, like the *Levite*'s Concubine, *Judg.* 19. and urge it as an evidence how cruel a Maſter he ſerves; and from thence emancipate and

free himſelf: And indeed every ſin carries in it ſo much of viſible toil, or ſecret ſmart, as would by force of this rule ſupplant and undermine it ſelf; and ſure *Satan* would never have armed men with ſo dangerous a *weapon*, had he not diſcern'd them ſo in love with *ſlavery*, as ſecures him it ſhould never be us'd againſt them; for if it ſhould, nothing could give him a more mortal wound, more irrecoverably ſhake his Kingdom. Nor would only that *infernal Region* feel the force of that *deſtructive* principle; it would make as ſtrange confuſions in *ſecular Regiments*.

Strictneſs of the Law made an excuſe for diſobedience.

4. For if ſuch *pleas* as theſe may be admitted, they will eaſily cancel all *Humane*, as well as *Divine* Laws, and every *malefactor* will transfer his *guilt* on the ſeverity of the *Legiſlator*: The *Thief* may ſay it is too great a difficulty for him to reſiſt the temptation of an apt *opportunity*, a rich prize; that his fingers are too ſlippery even for himſelf, and he cannot reſtrain them, and then quarrel at the ſtrictneſs of the *Law*, which has rais'd ſo high a fence about mens properties, that he who climbs it muſt endanger his *neck*. The *Rebel* may complain that the bands of *Allegiance* are too ſtreight, the yoke ſits too cloſe, galls and frets his tender fleſh, exclaim loudly at the *Tyranny* of thoſe that laid it on, and in that out-cry drown the noiſe of his own *Treaſon*. And ſo every other tranſgreſſor may accuſe the rule, as acceſſary to his ſwervings, till at laſt the *Laws* be made the only *Criminals*.

Ill conſequences of the Principle.

5. I leave every man to judge both of the equity and conſequences of ſuch diſcourſings in *Civil* matters, and ſhall only deſire he will apply them to *Spiritual* alſo, where certainly they are neither more juſt, nor leſs ruinous: And whilſt ſuch abſurd *pretences* as theſe paſs current, no wonder if *Chriſtianity* languiſh and grow impotent, want ſtrength to impreſs it ſelf on the lives of its *profeſſors*. The moſt infallible Receipt can work no cure on him, who upon the ſuſpicion of its bitterneſs, refuſes to taſte it. The moſt excellent *Laws* muſt loſe their regulating *power*, where the *execution* of them is obſtructed; and we may as reaſonably look for the efficacy of *Chriſtianity* among thoſe who never heard the *name*, as among thoſe who owning the *name*, do yet diſclaim its *precepts*; and ſo all thoſe interpretatively do, who by accuſing them of too great rigour, avert both themſelves and others from their Obedience.

Such men ill judges of Religion.

6. That the charge is ſcandalouſly unjuſt will appear to any, who ſhall allow themſelves the juſt means of information; but alas! the way of *Proceſs* men take in this affair is ſo inequitable, as certainly preſages the partiality of the *ſentence*: What perſon ever was there ſo ſo *innocent*, ſo *excellent*, who if arraigned at the *Tribunal* of his mortal enemy, could be acquitted? *Chriſt* himſelf ſhall be pronounced a *Blaſphemer*, when a *Caiphas* is to examine him: and no wonder if his *precepts* find proportionable dealing; if they be decried as *impoſſible*, *tyrannical*, perhaps *ridiculous* too, where the *ſcanning* of them is referr'd to thoſe, whoſe intereſt it is to defame them. Men *enthrone* their *luſts*, ſet them up in the *judgment-ſeat*, and none can expect they ſhall paſs ſuch a *ſentence*, as ſhall include their own *condemnation*: If they own the *commandment* to be *holy*, *juſt* and *good*, they muſt tacitly accuſe *themſelves* to be *impure*, *unjuſt* and *wicked*, and as ſuch to be conſign'd to wrath and judgment.

They beget [illegible]

7. Here then we have the true account how Chriſt's *commands*, which are in themſelves ſo far from grievous, have gotten ſo unkind a *reputation* among us; this is ſo direct a courſe for it, that we may ceaſe our *wonder*, though not our *grief* to ſee it; for we behold them ſtand to the award of thoſe with whom they have a profeſt enmity: The *Goal* gives ſentence on the Bench;

the *Bar* arraigns the Judgment-ſeat. Certainly when that Law which is *Spiritual* is ſubmitted to the arbtirement of groſs *carnality*, the Law of Liberty is taxed and rated by thoſe worſt *bondmen who are ſold under ſin*; 'tis impoſſible to find any fairer treatment. That which comes on purpoſe to dethrone ſin, diſpoſſeſſes it of the Empire it has uſurpt, will certainly be entertain'd with the ſame *exclamation* the Devils us'd to Chriſt, *Why art thou come to torment us*? But as if this general *Antipathy* were not enough to aſcertain the rejection of Chriſt's command; as if the *National* feud, as I may call it, between Heaven and Hell, were not thought irreconcileable enough, men offer yet harder meaſure, call in the aid of *perſonal* quarrels, and when the precepts come to be conſider'd, *refer* each of them ſingle to that particular Vice to which it has the directeſt contrariety.

And make a wrong application of its commands.

8. Thus when Chriſt's command of *meekneſs and forgiveneſs, of loving enemies, and turning the Cheek, bearing the Croſs*, or *ſelf-denial* calls for audience; they conſult (as *Rehoboam* did with his young hot-ſpurs) with their anger and malice, their rancour and revenge, and they ſoon give their *Verdict*; That to be meek is to be *ſervile*, a temper fit only for the abject. That to forgive enemies is a principle of *cowardice* that would emaſculate the world; to love them a piece of *Spaniel-like fawning*; but to turn the Cheek, not only to hazard, but invite new injuries by owning them as benefits; paying bleſſing for curſes, kindneſs and good-turns for hatred, is ſuch a *ridiculous patience*, as muſt expoſe to the inſolence of many, and the ſcorn and deriſion of all men. And then the *reſolution* is ready, they will be no ſuch *fools* for Chriſt's ſake. So when the precept of humility and lowlineſs comes to be conſider'd, their *Pride* is deputed to hear its plea, and then, though it bring the authority of Chriſt's *example* as well as his *command*, it will be judged invalid: *Chriſt* indeed *took upon him the form of a Servant*, and to that, humility was a proportionable *Adjunct*: But what is that to them whoſe aſpiring humour abhors ſubjection, 'tis not calculated for their *Meridian*, they are of another manner of Spirit, and would not have it embaſed by the admiſſion of ſo mean a quality: And though Chriſt hath put *poverty of Spirit* among his Beatitudes, they reſolve he ſhall not enſnare them with that *artifice*; they will not take his *meaſures* of felicity, or reſign that pleaſure they have in valuing themſelves, for any thing he propoſes in exchange. In like manner the precepts of temperance, ſobriety and chaſtity, are not permitted to the Judgment of ſober *reaſon*, nay, nor of meer natural *deſire*; but to *appetites* vitiated and inflam'd by radicated habits; and then the *Glutton* thinks to eat moderately, is to be ſtarved; and will as ſoon *put a knife*, Prov. 23. *to his throat*, in the vulgar ſenſe of cutting it, as in *Solomon*'s notion of reſtraining his exceſs. Thus the *Drunkard* with his falſe thirſts looks on ſobriety as a kind of Hell, where he ſhall want *a drop to cool his tongue*, and thinks the abandoning his debaucht jollities is an implicit adieu to all the comforts of life. The *Unclean* perſon when his blood is high, ſcoffs at Chaſtity as a religious kind of impotence, and only ſo far conſiders the *precept of pulling out the Eye*, as to infer that it were as eaſie literally to part with it, as to reſtrain its luſtful range, not look at all, as not look to luſt. And proportionably it fares with Charity and Bounty, which though our *Saviour* recommend, *Mammon* arraigns of robbery, and ſtigmatizes as a Thief that picks the Purſe, and rifles Coffers. But amidſt all theſe, *The taking up the Croſs, ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake*, and *the doctrine of ſelf-denial*, fall under the heavieſt prejudice. Theſe are oppos'd not by ſome one ſingle vice, but the confederate arms of all; even thoſe, whoſe intereſt are flatly oppoſite,

do here unite: *Herod* and *Pilate*, *Sadducees* and *Phariſees* accord againſt Chriſt, and all are freely ſuffer'd, nay invited to exhibit their *complaints* againſt theſe *Mandates*. *Covetouſneſs* cries out, that this is the moſt ruinous prodigality, caſts away an Eſtate in a lump, and lays all open to forfeiture and confiſcation: And *Prodigality* takes it as ill to be foreſtall'd, and have nothing left for it to diſſipate. *Profaneneſs* avows a contempt of it as a folly, and moſt open madneſs to part with real pleaſure for an *empty* name, or profit for that *Bankrupt thing* call'd Conſcience: And *Hypocriſie* has a more ſecret hatred of it, as its detector; that which will bring it to a Teſt which it cannot paſs. *Malice* puts in a *Caveat*, that this is to gratifie enemies, and loſe the ſatisfactions of revenge: And *Self-love* puts in another, that it is to deſtroy ones ſelf. In ſhort, every *limb* of the body of ſin diſcharges a *blow* at this Innocent and Divine Sanction; as if they meant it ſhould exemplifie its own doctrine by aſſuming that paſſive temper it recommends.

Our luſts make us improper judges of our duty:

9. But alas, Who can expect any more *upright* verdicts from ſuch *packt*, ſuch *corrupt* Juries; and why may not Chriſt be permitted to claim the common *benefit* of our *Laws*, to make his challenge and exceptions againſt this ſo incompetent *impanel*? 'Tis the counſel of the Wiſe Man, not to adviſe in common affairs with thoſe whoſe tempers may be ſuppos'd to biaſs them, *Conſult not*, ſays he, *with a coward in matters of War, nor with a ſluggard, of much buſineſs*, *Eccleſ.* 37. 11. and ſure if they be ill *Counſellors*, they muſt be worſe *Judges*: But why then do we ſet pride to judge of humility, luſt of purity, covetouſneſs of liberality; and make our *vices* the *arbitrators* of thoſe *Laws* which ſhould reſtrain them? This is ſuch a groſs *injuſtice* as common *humanity* abhors; we deal by other meaſures with men, the moſt notorious and flagitious criminals, and reſerve this way of proceſs for thoſe things only wherein our God may be concerned. 'Tis a ſevere exprobration of a profane people, *Malach.* 1. 8. where God accuſes them for treating *him* with leſs reverence than they would do a *mortal* Prince. *Offer it now to thy Prince*: But alas! we ſhall force him to deſcend far lower in his expoſtulation, ſo far we are from paying him the *duty* and regard belonging to a *Prince*, that we yield him not the rights of *Common* men; force him to ſtand to thoſe meaſures which we think too inequitable to preſs upon a Murderer, a Thief, or Rebel at the Bar.

But Conſcience is more equal or impartial in her judgment or verdict.

10. But this waving of common rules is a plain confeſſion that we need more indulgence, than thoſe will allow: When mens *luſts* thus uſurp the *Tribunal*, and judge in their own cauſe, 'tis a palpable diſcovery they dare not remit themſelves to any more equal determination. And indeed in this point of their intereſt, they paſs a right judgment: For 'tis certain were the caſe referr'd to any competent Judge, indeed to any but *themſelves*, they would inevitably be caſt; and ſure 'tis high time that ſome ſhould aſſiſt *oppreſt vertue* in its appeal; find it out ſome *Court of Equity* where its plea may be heard: And we need not travel *far* for that purpoſe, every man may do it in his own *breaſt*, where in his little *Commonwealth* he ſhall find a *Court* of God's erecting: Let him but draw the Cauſe *thither*, diſcuſs the matter in his own Conſcience; and he will ſoon find the former unrighteous ſentences revers'd: Let him but ſeriouſly reflect on his *violations* of thoſe ſacred Precepts of Chriſt; and obſerve what a *ſting* and ſecret remorſe every ſuch *breach* leaves within him: And that will be a competent atteſtation of the *equity* and obligingneſs of thoſe Mandates: For from whence elſe can the regret ariſe? Thoſe things that are either impoſſible in their nature, or unconcerning to us cannot beget it. No man accuſes

himſelf for not flying in the *Air*, or walking upon the *Water*; nor owns himſelf *guilty* in the non-obſervance of any *Laws*, but ſuch as have *power* to oblige him: and therefore theſe cloſe pangs and checks of *Conſcience* are an irrefragable evidence, that men do *inwardly* aſſent to the juſtice and authority of thoſe divine *rules*, with their *Actions*, yea, often their *words* too, do moſt oppugn.

11. But over and above the throes and after-pains of Conſcience, when ſin is brought forth, the ſelf-accuſation of the *Criminal*, when none beſide controuls, nay, many flatter and commend; I ſay beyond this ſecondary and reflext *Apology* for Chriſt's Law owed to the foregoing prevarication of it; there is an early and immediate verdict paſt in its behalf, in the eſteem and liking which thoſe documents command, where-e're they paſs: Creating an aſſent and veneration not only when obey'd, but from profeſt diſpiſers; who cannot chuſe but think well of that vertue they deſert, and the neceſſity of their affairs compels them to ſpeak ill of. An event *viſible* in the condemnation of our Saviour, where the Judge who *gave ſentence* againſt him, at the ſame moment *waſht his hands*, and openly profeſt *he found no fault in him*.

12. And indeed this very reflection on the *Author* of theſe Precepts, if well conſider'd, would ſuperſede all other arguments. The Mandates of the Goſpel on this one ſcore, that they are Chriſt's, are certainly both *pure* in themſelves, and *poſſible* to us: and ſo moſt worthy not only of all *obedience*, but all love *love* too. He who is our *Lord*, upon both the titles of *Creation* and *Redemption*, may certainly with all juſtice impoſe what laws he pleaſes on us. Yet he, who laid down his life for the redemption of the tranſgreſſions which were under the firſt Teſtament, cannot be imagin'd ſo inconſiderate of our frailty which himſelf had ſmarted for, as to introduce another of equal rigour, or be ſo prodigal of his blood, as to pour it out for thoſe who by a new ſet of impoſſible commands ſhould infallibly re-forfeit themſelves again: And if this cannot be ſuppos'd, the contrary may be concluded, that he hath ſo far condeſcended to our imbecillity, as not to *preſcribe* us any thing which he either finds or makes us not able to *perform*. 'Tis true indeed, his *Laws* are above the reach of our corrupt and debaſed *nature*; and they were unfit to be his, were they not ſo: But when he by his grace offers to elevate and refine this nature, bring it up to the pitch and purity of thoſe Laws, this is a far greater mercy than if he had deſcended to our corruption; ſo he might have contaminated himſelf, given laws unworthy of him: But alas! What advantage would it be to us, to have the *Blaſphemy* mentioned, *Pſal.* 50. ſo verified, to haveour *God* in this ſence, *ſuch a one as our ſelves*? But by this other *method* he purifies and exalts us; puts us in a capacity of being *like unto him*, in which is ſumm'd up at once, all both *vertue* and *felicity*.

The precepts of Religion are poſſible to be performed.

13. And on this glorious *end*, every particular *command* of his has a direct aſpect, every one of them tending to *re-impreſs* on us ſome part of that divine image which was raz'd out by the *firſt ſin*: And this, one would think enough to recommend them to our higheſt value. Certainly, if *Conſcience* may be judge, it will be ſo: There being in this caſe no middle between *devout* reverence, and *horrid* blaſphemy; for he that deſpiſes ſuch an *aſſimilation*, muſt neceſſarily alſo deſpiſe *him* who is ſo *reſembled*: He who thinks meekneſs, purity, humility, &c. *unamiable qualities*, can have little eſteem for him, in whom they are *tranſcendently eminent*, but will take the Prophet at his word, and ſay, *There is no form nor comelineſs in him*, *Eſ.* 53. But this ſure can never be the verdict of Conſcience; he that can thus *pro-*

The end of Religion is to make us like God.

nounce, muſt be ſuppos'd to have ſuppreſt and *ſilenc'd* that. It being one of the moſt indelible *notions* there, That *all that is in God, is ſublimely excellent.* But becauſe 'tis indeed too poſſible that Conſcience may be put under ſuch an undue reſtraint, ſuffer the violence of a *Priſoner*, when it ſhould ſuſtain the place of a *Judge* : Becauſe many men dare not permit their conſciences to ſpeak, leſt they ſhould ſay more than they are willing to hear. And laſtly, ſince theſe perſons make their appeal to reaſon, pretend the aids, and boaſt in the advantages of that, it may not be amiſs to bring the *Cauſe* unto the *Bar*, whoſe *Empire* and *Authority* none muſt diſclaim that own the *Style*, and leaſt of all thoſe *Scepticks* in Religion with whom we have to do; who will allow of no conviction but from it.

The duties of Religion are very agreeable to reaſon;

14. And *God*, who, as the Apoſtle ſays, *leaves not himſelf without witneſs*, has ſo temper'd and diſpos'd his *Precepts*, as to qualifie them to paſs even this Teſt alſo, they being not the *contradictions* but *improvements* of natural Reaſon : And ſo moſt apt to recommend themſelves to all that is *Man*, not *Brute* about us. Indeed they have the very ſame aim and deſign with that. It has ever been the grand buſineſs of *ſober reaſon* firſt to diſcover, and then to attain that *one ſupreme good*, which would give reſt and felicity to the Soul : In this inquiſition have the *Philoſophers* and greateſt Maſters of Reaſon, laid out their moſt ſerious ſtudies and deepeſt contemplations; and in their indefatigable purſuits ſeem joyntly to ſigh out *David's* queſtion, *Who will ſhew us any good?* And now the *Goſpel* comes with a ſolution of this ſo important a Query, *brings theſe glad tidings of joy* to all people, and that not only in its *credenda*, by informing us what that *good* is; but in its *agenda* too, by tracing us out the *way* to it; beating us a path which will certainly lead us to that *ſummum bonum* which our very *nature* implicitly gaſps after : And ſure *reaſon* can never jar with *this*, which comes thus as a happy *Auxiliary* to ſuccour its impotence : As an infallible *guide* to conduct its ſteps : and as a glorious light to give it a clear view of what it before blindly groped after. 'Tis a certain indication of *madneſs*, to *tear* and miſchief thoſe things that would be uſeful to us, to curſe and revile a friend, or fly in the face of thoſe whoſe charity brings them to our aid; and therefore 'tis moſt evident that *reaſon* muſt firſt ceaſe to be reaſon, and commence *frenzy*, before 'tis poſſible it can ſet it ſelf in defiance of thoſe Laws of Chriſt, which are thus accommodated to its greateſt intereſts.

and lay a reſtraint on our Paſſions.

15. And as the accord is thus obſervable in the *ultimate*, ſo is it in the *intermediate* deſign alſo. *Reaſon* had by its twilight diſcerned, That that Soveraign *bliſs* it aim'd at, would never be hit by an unſteady hand; by him who was perpetually toſſed and agitated by his turbulent inordinate appetites. Therefore young men, yet in the heat and ferment of their blood, were ſolemnly proſcrib'd and baniſht from the Schools and Lectures of *Philoſophy*; therefore luſtrations and *Cathartick*s of the mind were ſought for, and all endeavour us'd to calm and regulate the *fury*, if not extirpate (which ſome contended for) the very being of the Paſſions : that ſo a preparation might be made, *firſt*, for the knowledge, and *then* the attainment of felicity : Now the *Goſpel-precepts* have viſibly the ſame *end* and purpoſe : Every one of them expreſly ſingling out ſome irregular affection to combate and ſubdue : So that right *reaſon* and *they* are evidently of a *Sect* and Party, inſomuch that ſeveral of the ancienteſt Fathers of the Church attributed the excellent documents of *Heathen Philoſophers* to the *Divine* λόγος, the reaſon and eſſential *Word of God* which after was *incarnate* upon Earth; and brought auxiliary ſtrengths of *grace* to aid the weakneſſes of *nature.* The bleſſed *Jeſus*, whoſe bare word *checkt the Sea* in its higheſt fury, and by

that Miracle atteſted his Divinity; as much exerts himſelf in ſilencing the louder Tempeſts, and calming the inteſtine ſtorms within our breaſts. And certainly *reaſon* will not quarrel to have been thus relieved, it being the *property* only proud of *folly* to chuſe rather to *loſe* a victory, than *owe* it to the aid of an Allie.

Several duties inſtanc'd in, and firſt of Meekneſs.

16. From this general view, it were eaſie to deſcend to obſerve the exact concurrence of particulars. God loves *a reaſonable ſervice*, and has ſo temper'd his commands, that every act of obedience we perform may be ſo qualified, and gain unto its votaries the *Elogium* promis'd in the Law of *Moſes*, Deut. 4. 9. *Surely this people is a wiſe and underſtanding people.* And firſt that the command of *Meekneſs* is a moſt *rational* precept, can never be doubted by any, who remember but the common definition of *Anger*, that it is *Furor brevis*, and ſure 'tis very reaſonable not to be mad; and he that has obſerv'd the unmanly tranſportations of that wild paſſion, how that the firſt violence it offers is to the man within him, will certainly think it the Intereſt, not only of his *Religion*, but common prudence, and right *Reaſon* to ſuppreſs it. And the like is to be ſaid of the more ſolemn *Frenzy* of deep malice and deliberate Revenge, where the fury wants the allay of being tranſient and ſhort-liv'd, is embodied into Complexion and Temper, and grows inveterate into Nature. *Anger* indeed is a *fire*, and he that touches it, though but lightly, will find it *ſcorch* him: But the *Malicious* lays himſelf as it were to *roaſt* at it; prolongs and ſpins out his own *Torment*, as if he meant to anticipate his *puniſhment* in his very crime, and commence his *Hell* here, *in unquenchable fire*. Truly no *ſin* does more repreſent that ſtate of horror to which it tends, it gives a man not only a certain *title* but an ample *earneſt*, pays him part in hand of thoſe diſmal wages. This was ſo well underſtood even by the *Heathens*, that we ſee the *Poets* knew not how more *emphatically* to deſcribe the future *torment* of an envious and malicious perſon, than by the repreſentation of his *ſin*. *Prometheus*'s *Vultur* begins her quarry in this life; every maglignant *thought*, every ſpightful *wiſh* preys upon his heart that harbours it: Every revengeful project puts him in the pangs of labour till it be brought forth; and when it is, it commonly rebounds ſo miſchievouſly upon the Parent, that the birth ſeems like that of *Agrappina*, when ſhe bare *Nero* that murdered her. And ſurely not only *reaſon*, but common *ſence* will ſay this is a ſtate to be deteſted, and conſequently muſt give its ſuffrage to thoſe Laws of Meekneſs and Charity, which are the only expedients to prevent it. *Peace* is deſervedly reckon'd among the *higheſt bleſſings* of Communities, and ſure it has a proportionable value in every ſingle member of thoſe greater bodies, it being that which is indiſpenſibly requiſite to the enjoying of any other good. A *War* we know interrupts at once all the *profit* and *pleaſures* of a Nation: and this hoſtile *temper* in a man's mind does the very ſame, and like *Choler* in the ſtomach, takes off all *guſt* of the moſt delightful things, and ſo becomes *Hell* in the *pœna damni*, as well as that of *Senſe*: And then how abſurd an impatience is it, for men to think every the ſlighteſt injury from another inſupportable, and yet heap ſuch heavy preſſures upon themſelves? Like froward *Children* roar out for the leaſt touch from another hand, yet knock and batter themſelves without complaint: As if their only contention were, that they may be the ſole *Authors* of their own *calamity*. And that which adds yet more, if it be poſſible to add to ſo vaſt a folly, is, that *revenge* never repairs any *Injury*: If I have been reproacht or defam'd, 'Tis not the wounding of my enemie's body that will heal my fame; I may by that means help to ſpread the Libel by

inviting many to enquire the cauſe of our quarrel: But that is no *Medium* to prove him a ſlanderer, the world being too well acquainted with the nature of revenge to imagine it an argument of his innocency that acts it: So far it is from being ſuch, that it gives a moſt violent preſumption of guilt, according to that notable *obſervation* of the *Hiſtorian, Convitia ſpreta exoleſcunt, ſi iraſcare agnita videntur.* In like manner ſuppoſe me hurt in my body, *retaliation* brings no *balm* to my ſores: My pains abate not by his having the like or greater; nor would my Wounds *feſter the leſs*, though his ſhould *gangreen*. So if I am indamaged in my goods, I may contrive to repay him that ill turn, and yet not recover my own loſs; and generally the ſpightful ſpoils that are made, are of that nature. 'Tis true, the Law may in ſome caſes repair the injured perſon; but then that is owing to the Juſtice of the *Law*, not to the malice of the *Plantiff*: For he that ſues upon the naked intuition of recovering his *right*, without any aſpect of *revenge* on the invader, has as fully the benefit of the *Law* (and indeed none can innocently have it otherwiſe) and then to what ſerves the vindicative humour, what increment or advantage can the ſuperaddition of his revenge bring him in? 'Tis ſure in all theſe inſtances it often does the quite contrary; plunges him in farther troubles and dangers, and when all this is conſider'd, we may certainly pronounce *Chriſt*'s precept of Meekneſs partakes as well of the *Serpent* as the *Dove*, is as well *prudent* as *innocent*: Nor is this *Concluſion* at all ſhaken by that *Objection* which men make from the danger of inviting more injuries and affronts by this tameneſs: For firſt, ſuppoſe there were truth in it; that hazard could not balance the many certain miſchiefs which have been evinc'd inſeparably to follow the contrary temper: And it were certainly leſs penal to endure multitudes of light and tranſient *Abuſes*, than thoſe far more uneaſie ways of *redreſs*, which mens revenges ſuggeſt to them: And then 'twill be perfectly reaſonable, *of* theſe *two evils to chuſe the leſs*. As for the greater and more important violations, there are legal ways which may prove redreſs in ſome caſes, or prevention in others: He that is ſlandered or impoveriſhed, may take a courſe to clear his *Innocence*, or recover his *goods*: He that is hurt or maim'd, though he is uncapable of reparations, yet the Law provides for his future ſecurity, by awarding ſuch *penalties*, as may diſcourage the offender from repeating the *violence*: And to theſe aids, a man may reſort with theſe *Proviſo*'s, *firſt*, that he abſtract from all deſign of revenge; and *ſecondly*, that the matter be of *weight*; and certainly he that by theſe *legal means* cannot be ſecured, can be much leſs ſo by any *private attempt* of his own: For he that deſpiſeth the coercive *power* of Laws, will much more contemn the *enmity* of a ſingle perſon. The only difficulty in this caſe is, when a State is in ſuch a confuſion that there is no lawful Judicature to appeal to; but that implies ſo many ſadder miſeries, than the want of ſuch a redreſs amounts to, that every man may patiently enough caſt this into the heap of greater evils; and not conſider that one preſſure, when ſo much weightier calamity exacts his grief: But ſure the *ſuſpenſion of Law* in this particular does no more *qualifie* a private perſon to be his own *Revenger*, than it inveſts him in any other part of *Authority*; and he may with as good right place himſelf on the Bench, and become a *Judge* in *other* mens cauſes, as thus become both *Judge* and *Executioner* in his *own*.

An Objection againſt it Anſwer'd.

17. But in the *laſt* place, the ground of this objection ſeems weak and ſandy; for that meekneſs is not the way to expoſe a man, generally ſpeaking, to more ſuffering: 'Tis poſſible indeed, through the barbarity of ſome few inſulting *Cowards*, who love to vapour *good cheap*, that they may trample

on thoſe who give leaſt reſiſtance ; but this is not the common bent of *humane Nature*, (which ought to be the meaſure in this caſe) we find men uſually exaſperated by *oppoſition*, who are calm'd and appeas'd by *Gentleneſs*. *Anger* is not of the nature of that monſtrous *Fire* the *Hiſtorian* tells us of, which *nothing but blows could extinguiſh*. It is the *obſervation* of the wiſeſt of Men, that a *ſoft anſwer turneth away wrath*, and mens *paſſions* are like *bullets* which batter the walls that ſtand inflexible, but fall harmleſly into Wool or Feathers ; and I doubt not common experience will atteſt it, that none do generally fall under fewer of theſe ſtorms, than they, who are thus prepar'd to bear them. Let a meek and an angry perſon caſt up their accounts together, and compare the number of affronts and contumelies they have met with, and I believe the *odds* will be as *great*, as between *Saul's* thouſands and *David's* ten thouſands. 'Tis certain that the return made to the firſt injury provokes a new one ; men being ſo partial to themſelves, that he who receives a harm by way of *retaliation*, never reflects on his own firſt guilt, but looks on it as a naked *injury*, and ſo purſues his revenge, which has again the ſame effect on the other, and ſo this *wild-fire* runs round, till it have ſet all in a *flame* ; made the ſaddeſt vaſtations, not only in men's *minds*, but their outward *concernments* too, in the many fatal outrages, which theſe eager contentions occaſion, all which would be avoided by a meek diſregard of the firſt provocation : So that although ſome injuries may fall upon the Paſſive man, yet infallibly there would be no broils and quarrels, which are alone the great accumulators and multipliers of injuries ; which alone demonſtrates how unjuſtly *meekneſs* is charg'd with ſo much as an accidental production of them ; and vindicates that *precept* of *Chriſt* which has fallen under ſo much, not only *cavil* but *ſcorn* ; it appearing, that to abſtain from revenge, and refer the hazards of that to God's providence (which is the importance of his command to *turn the Cheek*) is the greateſt even moral *ſecurity* againſt *violence*, and ſo approves our *Law-giver*, (in this ſo decried particular) to be as well the *wonderful Counſellor*, as the *Prince of Peace*.

Secondly, of humility.

18. In the next place, if we weigh the precept of humility and lowlineſs in the balance of ſober diſcourſe, we ſhall certainly find it hold a *juſt weight*. Indeed pride is nothing but deceit, a mere cheat and deluſion, and ſo every man can diſcern it in another, we there are able to trace the windings of this *Serpent*, and ſay *this* man thinks himſelf mor wiſe , *this* more learned, a third more holy than he is : yet alas ! in our own breaſts we diſcern not the abuſe, ſuffer him to perſwade *us* what he but promis'd to our *firſt Parents*, that we are *as Gods*, ſomething ſo ſuper-excellent, that all muſt reverence and adore : And herein we take him at his word, never ſuſpect theſe glorious *Attributions* may be no more than *Complement* or Flattery, or what is no leſs obvious, *deriſion* and *ſcorn*. To a conſidering man 'twould be a ſhrewd *preſumption* againſt whatever *pride* ſuggeſts. that 'tis attended always by *ſelf-love*, which is, as it were, the *Common Setter* to all thoſe cheats which circumvent and fool us : But there want not alſo more convincing proofs of its deceit and unſincerity. When e're we overween and believe well of our ſelves, it is in contemplation of ſome *imaginary* or elſe *real* good ; ſomewhat a Man has not, or ſomewhat that he has : If we do it upon the former account, that is undeniably a groſs *deluſion* ; a kind of *deceptio viſus*, a filling of the Eye with fantaſtick *aerial* Images, which have no ſolid Being : and God knows, ſuch *Phaſmes*, ſuch Apparitions are moſt of thoſe excellencies which men applaud in themſelves ; things conjur'd up by the *Magick* of a ſtrong imagination, and are only ſeen

within that *Circle* in which the *Enchanter* ſtands: And though *Satan* be the *grand Maſter of this black Art*, yet his *Pupils* are now grown ſo dexterous, that he ſeldom needs to be call'd in; our own partialities and fondneſſes to our ſelves, are abundantly ſufficient for the purpoſe. But if in the *ſecond* place we ſuppoſe the things to be *really* extant in us, yet *pride* runs us upon *another error* no leſs dangerous than the *former*, for it betrays us to miſtake the true *owner* of them, emboldens us to ſet our own mark upon thoſe *rich Wares*, in whoſe acquiſt we have not been ſo much as *Factors*; God is the one great Author and Proprietor of all that is or can be valuable in us; to his Providence or his Grace we owe all the accompliſhment of our outward or inward man, and though he allows us the *uſe* and benefit of them, yet the *glory* is a ſpecial *royalty*, which (as the Gold or Silver Mines of a Nation) is reſerv'd to his *Crown*, an incommunicable piece of his *Regality*. And how wofully does our pride beſool us, when it brings us in ſuch falſe *Inventories* of our goods, makes us dream our ſelves rich by anothers wealth; like *Children* that *call every thing theirs which looks ſplendidly*, or the mad *Athenian* celebrated by *Horace* for his happy frenzy, that *reſolv'd all the Ships and Wares his own that came into the Cities harbour?* But how more ſadly does it betray us, when it thus puts us upon the invaſion of his propriety, who is not, as the impotent *Monarchs* of the Earth, unable to aſſert his own *rights*, but can certainly *vindicate* himſelf to our *confuſion*; againſt whom no rebellion can be any longer proſperous than he willingly permits it, and who has ſolemnly avowed *he will not give his glory to another?* And when our pride makes us thus both ridiculous and miſerable, when it ſeduces us not only into the folly of *Children* and extravagancies of Lunaticks, but at once into the guilt of bold, and puniſhments of improſperous *rebels*: Certainly reaſon can never become its *Advocate*, or put in any *demur* to that ſentence which excludes ſo treacherous a gueſt out of men's *hearts*; which is the ſole aim of thoſe *laws of humility*, which *Chriſt* has given us.

Thirdly, of Temperance and Chaſtity.

19. Nor will the precepts of *temperance* and *purity* find any *worſe doom* at this *Bar*, the contrary vices being ſuch indignities and contumelies unto humane nature, as can never find any countenance from this ſupreme part of it: 'Tis the prerogative of our Reaſon, that it diſcriminates us *from*, and elevates us *above* beaſts: For can it ever be brought to reſign this ſo glorious a priviledge, aſſent to the admiſſion of thoſe brutiſh appetites which would over-run the *Soul*, level its *ſuperior* with its *inferior* faculties; confound the diſtinction of *rational* and *ſenſitive*, and in a word, render the *Beaſt* ſo ravenous as to eat up the *Man*. Yet *thus* it is in thoſe ſordid Sins of *intemperance* and *uncleanneſs*, unleſs perhaps they are ſo much worſe than *beſtial* that I wrong the generality of the Brutes in the compariſon, it being only ſome few of them, the very *beaſts* of the Beaſts that are guilty of any ſuch *exceſſes*; for generally their *appetites* do not tranſgreſs the *regular ends* of *nature*, they know no ſuch diſeaſe as *ſurfeiting*, but eat to ſatisfie *hunger*, and couple at ſuch ſeaſons as beſt tend to preſerve their kind; and then 'tis to be conſidered, how baſe, how *degenerous* a deſcent it is for us to ſtoop, not only below our *own* nature, but *theirs*; what a *ſolitude* theſe vices reduces us to, that not ſo much as the nobler ſort of *beaſts* will bear us *company*; we muſt wander upon the *mountains* to court a *Goat*, we muſt rake the *mire* to find a *Swine*, before we can furniſh our ſelves with any *aſſociates*: And ſure all this is ſo open an *hoſtility* againſt Reaſon, that it can by no means be her *intereſt* to abett it. Ask her whether ſhe would be *preſt to death* with *loads of meat*, whether ſhe would be *drown'd* in *flouds*

of drink, whether ſhe would be ſuffocated with the noiſom vapours of putrefaction and rottenneſs, and the anſwer ſhe gives to theſe tells you her ſence of Gluttony, Drunkenneſs and Uncleanneſs: Alas! ſhe ſuffers from them the moſt barbarous outrages, isinvaded not only in her authority, but her very *Being*, and therefore even upon the ſo celebrated principle of ſelf-preſervation, muſt muſter all her forces to vindicate the injury and defend herſelf. And then certainly *Chriſt*'s commands of ſobriety and purity muſt needs be entertained with all alacrity and gladneſs, as an acceſſion of ſtrength to her party, an aid to aſſiſt her in that juſt and neceſſary *War*.

Fourthly, of Liberality.

20. And as Reaſon thus pronounces againſt the ſins of the *fleſh*, ſo in the next place does it certainly againſt thoſe of the *world*. *Mammon* himſelf will not be able to bribe this *Judge*, but when *Chriſt*'s *precept* of Charity and Liberality comes before this *Tribunal*, it will infallibly be not only acquitted, but magnified and applauded, be call'd from the *Bar* to the *Bench*, Commiſſion'd like the *Jews*, *Heſt.* 9. *To bear rule over them that hated them*; to diſſipate at once toe wealth and the covetouſneſs of the Worldling; have the keys put into its hand; that it may have free acceſs to his *Coffers*; this certainly muſt be the event of this Trial, for 'tis confeſſedly the part of Reaſon to diſpoſe every thing to thoſe uſes which are moſt proper and advantageous, ſuch as may bring in moſt real benefit to the owner. Now what other employment of *wealth* is there (after competent accommodations are provided) which can contribute to a man's *felicity*? If it be laid out like the rich man's in the Goſpel, in delicious fare, or Purple and fine Linnen; certainly it makes not the leaſt approach towards it. Firſt, for exceſſive fare, if a man be not exceſſive too in the eating, what does he enjoy of it? Meat has no natural propriety to the eye, and can make no impreſſions of pleaſure there; but if he be *voracious* and intemperate, 'tis then ſo far from making him happy, that it dejects him into the forlorn condition, even now mention'd, ſets him at odds with his reaſon, his very manhood, nay, I may add, with his very ſenſe too; the diſplacencies that he receives by the conſequences of his exceſs, far outweighing all that is grateful in it. This is well deſcrib'd by the Wiſe Man, *Eccleſ.* 31. 19.

Vanity of Pride in Apparel.

21. As for the *gayety of Apparel*, that can never in ſober judging be thought any advantage; 'tis that which only youth and folly puts a value upon, and as we out-grow the one, ſo do we the other: All that is convenient in Cloaths is as well, nay, better provided for without it: A *rich ſuit* is only *heavier*, not *warmer* than a plain; and it is a kind of prodigy to ſee *how heavily vanity*, which is in it ſelf ſo *light*, ſits upon ſome men, who are content even to make themſelves *Porters*, ſo their *Taylors* may lay on the *burthen*: And thus in many other inſtances the fineneſs of Cloaths deſtroys the eaſe, ſo that it often *helps* men to pain, but can never *rid* them of any; the body may be languiſhing and infirm under the moſt ſplendid cover: *Herod's royal apparel* ſecures him not from being *eaten with worms*; and *Lazarus's Ulcers* would have been never the leſs *painful*, though they had been *wrapt in* Dives's *fine Linnen*?

Of too great a retinue, or number of Servants.

22. Or if the *wealth* be laid out on any other part of *that* the world calls *greatneſs*, as an *honourable retinue*, *Troops of attendants*, and the like; the return will be no leſs *empty*: Multitudes of unprofitable *ſervants* being a great *burthen*, but no degree of *advantage*. Alas! does my *meat* reliſh ever the better, becauſe my *table* is ſurrounded with *waiters*? Or when I go out, does my *train of followers* make the *Air* the more refreſhing to me? does not rather the *duſt* they raiſe make it *leſs*, annoy and ſtifle me? As for *matter of buſineſs*, the number of *ſervants* tends rather to hinder than advance it;

daily experience atteſting, that in crouds of domeſticks every one of them thinks his idleneſs will be hid: The care of *doing*, and the guilt of *omitting*, is transferr'd from one to another, and none has any farther *thought* than how he may *quit* himſelf either of the *burthen* or the *blame*; ſo that upon the final account, all that accrues to a *Maſter* by the *greatneſs of his Family*, is the *encreaſe of his care* in the regiment of it: A great deal of vigilance and circumſpection being required to keep it in any tolerable *order*; and if it be not ſo kept, his houſe becomes a *wilderneſs*, and himſelf a *prey* to the Beaſts he feeds: The licentiouſneſs of the Servant redounding more ways than one to the damage of the *Maſter*.

Of Prodigality and Covetouſneſs.

23. If we ſhould now proceed more *minutely* to every other *ſingle expence* which *vanity* and *pride* ſuggeſts, we ſhould certainly find the like ſucceſs of our inqueſt; nothing of *real felicity*, but on the contrary the *vanity* ſo interwoven and incorporate with *vexation of Spirit*, that 'tis impoſſible to ſever them: So that thus to employ ones riches is rather to *ſuffer* than *enjoy* them. But if we ſuppoſe a man on the other ſide ſuch a *Reverer of his Wealth*, that he dares not *employ* it at all, unleſs it be at the *bank*, for the bringing in of more; that he keeps it as men do beaſts reſerv'd for breed, manumit them from all work but that of propagation; Such a perſon is ſurely of all others the fartheſt from receiving any advantage by it: He converts it from a *ſervant* into a *tyrant*, and ſad experience ſhews us the calamity of ſuch a tranſmutation. It has been always held the ſevereſt treatment of *Slaves* and *Malefactors*, *damnare ad Metalla*, to force them to dig in Mines; now this is the *covetous man's lot*, from which he is never to expect a releaſe, as being his own remorſeleſs and more than *Egyptian task-maſter*: And the parallel holds too, in the gainleſsneſs as well as the laboriouſneſs of the work; Thoſe wretched creatures buried in earth and darkneſs were never the richer for all the *Ore* they digg'd, no more is the inſatiate Miſer, he has no power to diſpoſe of any of his *acquiſts*; and though he calls them his, yet alas he poſſeſſes them no otherwiſe than a Priſoner does his *Gaol*, a Mad-man his *Chains*, they are only inſtruments of his *thraldom*, and the getting more ſerves only to add more weight to his Shackles; and certainly *wealth* can be no way worſe diſpos'd, than thus to buy ſo baſe a *ſervitude*.

Charity beſt imploys our Wealth.

24. And now ſince neither the luxurious ſpending, nor the covetous keeping can advantage us one ſtep towards any thing that can be called *happy*; but do on the contrary engage us upon toil and *miſery*: *Wealth* ſeems to be a very oppreſſive burthen, ſuch as we can neither caſt off, nor ſafely bear; and truly ſo it is till *Charity* comes in to our Aid; which as the proper *element of wealth*, renders that light which gravitates elſewhere, and as the *Elixir* unto Metals transforms them into Gold, ſtamps purity and price upon them: By freely giving, endows the Donor with whatever he beſtows; enriches him, and what is more enriches Wealth it ſelf. Without this art of uſing, and diſpoſing our Eſtates, we are thoſe *Indians* who change their Gold for Glaſs: That ſilly Fiſherman, who having found a maſs of *Ambergrieſe*, employed it to the liquoring of his Boots; are fooliſh to the height of *Middas* in the Fable; who being promiſed to have whatever he would wiſh, made his demand that every thing he toucht might preſently be Gold, and run the hazard that he did of being *ſtarved* by our unhappy affluence. Men ſay indeed that *Gold* by preparation becomes a ſoveraign Cordial, but certainly it never does rejoyce the heart ſo much as when Charity is the *Chymiſt*; the poor man's hand is the beſt *Limbeck* to extract this *Magiſtery* and tincture, the flames of love will really perform thoſe *miracles*, they of the Furnace boaſt of; and would they employ themſelves in this *laboratory*, they would

find the *omnipotent efficacy* they dream of, ſooner in this way of *diſſipating*, than in all their *arts*, or rather Fancies of generating Gold. 'Tis certainly a moſt generous and enlivening pleaſure which reſults from a *ſeaſonable liberality*: When I ſee a man ſtruggling with *want*, his very ſpirit as well as body ſtooping under the preſſure; if I then relieve him, the *humane nature* within me which is common to us both, does by a kind of *Sympathetick motion* exult and raiſe up it ſelf; but if I have any *piety*, that muſt do it much more; for as the *former* ſhewed me *my own image* in my poor *brother*, ſo *this* ſhews me *God*'s: And how tranſcendent a ſatisfaction muſt it be, to have thus reſcued him who bears ſo divine an impreſs, to have paid ſome part of *Gratitude* to my Creator for my own Being, by making my ſelf, in my low ſphere, the giver or preſerver of that life, which he firſt breathed into another? *This*, and This only is the *way* to raiſe felicity out of *wealth*; and ſurely ſince the attaining of happineſs is the one grand purſuit of our *reaſon*, that muſt even before it has ſubjected its ſelf to the *faith of Chriſt*, give aſſent to the *prudence of his Command* in *this* as well as the *former* inſtances.

Reaſonableneſs of Suffering for Righteouſneſs ſake.

25. But there remains a *Precept* of our *Saviour*'s allied to this, which ſeems by no means to *comport* and *hold a correſpondence* with the dictates of *right reaſon*; the *taking up the Croſs*, and *ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake*; which contradicts the fundamental law of ſelf-preſervation, and the great end of being, felicity and happineſs. But this *ſuggeſtion*, how ſpecious ſoever it appear, is utterly *fallacious*; for 'tis no good conſequence, that becauſe *reaſon* aims at our being *happy*, therefore it forbids us all *voluntary ſufferings*, ſince that the caſe may be ſo ſet, That *ſuch a ſuffering* may be the *faireſt medium* left us to our *happineſs*. 'Tis a known rule, That *of two evils the leaſt is to be choſen*: and the election of the leſſer ill, though it be no *abſolute*, yet is a *comparative* good; and its *attainment* as far as the neceſſity of our affairs permits, is our *felicity*: And reaſon can provide no farther. Now this is the eſtate of the preſent inſtance: *Two evils* are propos'd, a *natural* and a *moral*; the Natural, though in its ſelf to be averted, yet much inferior to the Moral, and then *reaſon* ſoon reſolves the *Dilemma*, that the *natural is to be choſen*: All that can be queſtioned in this affair, is *whether reaſon define the moral evil to be the greater*, but this can bear no long diſpute with any who conſider but the *nature of reaſon*, which being ſeated in the *upper ſoul* of a man, is no way concerned in thoſe *Ills*, which make their impreſſion on the *ſenſitive part*: But moral ills ſtrike higher, invade the *mind*, cloud the *reaſon*; nay, often depoſe it from its regiment, as is too frequently exemplified in the force of vicious habits; and therefore by how much our *reaſon* is ſuperior to our *ſenſe*, ſo much are thoſe to be accounted the *greateſt evils*, which aſſault that *nobler part* of us. This certainly will now be the *determination* of Reaſon, if ſhe may be permitted the freedom of her vote: For thus was it formerly, where ſhe bare the moſt ſway, and uncontrouled rule; the wiſeſt and beſt conſidering of *humane*, as well as *divine Authors*, having eſtabliſht it as an undoubted *Aphoriſm*, that *honeſty is to be preferr'd before both gainful and pleaſant*: So that nothing renders a man ſo *deplorable*, as that which violates his *integrity*; nay, they have generally gone higher, exhorted men to *become voluntiers in vertues warfare, not to ſuſpend their ſufferings, till they were forc'd out by the competition of a crime; but offer themſelves free oblations*. Thus to ſuffer for ones *country* or ones *friend*, was thought ſo *worthy*, ſo *heroick* a thing, that *noble* and *ingenuous ſpirits* were *emulous* of it: And it was ſo ſtated a caſe that *Epictetus* forbids a man, on ſuch an occaſion to conſult with the *Oracle*, whether he ſhould do it or no, it being *neceſſary* to be done, whatever ill ſucceſs or ruine be predicted, ὅτι ὁ θάνατος σημαίνεται, ἢ

πήρωσις μέρους σώματος, ἢ φυγὴ, and how ſerious they were in theſe *perſwaſions* ſome of them have *practically* evidenced, as having *ſuffered* very conſiderable preſſures, nay *death* it ſelf, rather than they would bow to the *predominant vices* of their Age, or omit the occaſion of *eminent vertue*. *Ariſtides* would be juſt in ſpight of the *Oſtraciſm*. *Regulus* obſervant of his *Oath* made to a faithleſs *enemy*, though *death* and *torment* attended the *performance*. *Licurgus*, to perpetuate to his Citizens the benefit of his *good Laws*, as ſubtilly deſigns *perpetual baniſhment* unto himſelf, as others uſe to contrive for *humour* and for *empire* there. *Codrus* redeems the ſafety of his *army* with his own *death* : *Curtius* makes himſelf a *Martyr* for his *country*, and *Socrates* in the ſtricter ſence becomes one for his *God* : Laid down his *life* in atteſtation of that moſt *fundamental truth* and leading *article of Faith*, πιστεύειν εἰς ἕνα θεὸν, the *belief* of *one God*. And yet we find not that thoſe *times*, which were ſo ill as to ſhed his *blood*, were ſo bad as to defame his *memory* ; he is not recorded either as *fool* or *hypochondriack* ; nor have his *ſufferings* ſtruck him out of the liſt of *Philoſophers* : But he ſtands there the more conſpicuouſly in thoſe *bloody characters* ; and however the credit of the *Oracle* may be otherwiſe diſparaged, it never was on this account, that it had declared *Socrates* to be the *wiſeſt of Men*. And yet both he and the reſt had either *none*, or very *imperfect* confus'd apprehenſions of a future *reward*, when they engaged on preſent Suffering, and Death it ſelf : So that we might be tempted to imagine, that ſome ſtrange change and *tranſmutation* has now befaln *vertue*, that it has put on ſo much a *diſtant* appearance from its *ancient* ſelf, that the acceſſion of new obligations, and higher hopes, ſhould abſolve, avert and utterly diſpirit us ; inſomuch that what was Conſtancy in a *Heathen*, ſhould be folly in a *Chriſtian*. Certainly this is a *Metamorphoſis* of our own making, we look through deforming *optick-glaſſes*, ſuch as our *avarice* or effeminate *ſenſualities* convey into our hands, which give not only ſtrange and ghaſtly, but withal *ridiculous ſhapes* ; but if we would conſult our *reaſon*, that would ſhew us things in their *proper forms*. Vertue and Reaſon are both the ſame they were ſo many hundred years ago, and where the *object* and the *faculty* admit of no *mutation*, it is impoſſible there ſhould really be any ſuch *variable appearance*. If *Socrates* were ſo zealous for the *one God*, that he choſe rather to relinquiſh his *life*, than to conſent to, or but connive at the profane rivalry of *Polytheiſm*, and yet be no Fool ; certainly we may as ſecurely tranſcribe his copy : And though the particular Article may not be the ſame ; yet if it be any thing wherein vertue is concerned, the cauſe is no leſs warrantable : He that ſuffers for a *practical* point, is no more a prodigal of his pains, than he that lays'em out on the higheſt *ſpeculative*. The *Commandments* may have as good *Martyrs* as the *Creed* ; for the ſame *authority* has required our *obedience* to the *one*, that exacts our *faith* of the *other*. Nor is there any neceſſity of *Heathen* or *Jewiſh* Tribunal, to convert our ſufferings to *Martyrdom* ; we may receive that Crown from the hands of thoſe that own the ſame faith with us. Thoſe that ſay with the moſt ſeeming vehemence, *Let the Lord be glorified*, may yet hate and caſt out their brethren for his names ſake, *Iſa.* 66. 5. He that tells me I fear not *God* ſo much as he, may yet perſecute me for honouring the *King* more ; and my blood pour'd out upon that account, becomes an acceptable Sacrifice to him, who has commanded my Subjection to the higher Powers. He who calls Chriſt his *head*, may yet rend and tear his Body ; and if I love its communion ſo well, as to take my ſhare in the *Maſſacre*, I approach toward that dignity and comfort *S. Paul* ſo glories in, of *filling up that which is behind, of the afflictions of Chriſt in my fleſh, for* *his bodies ſake which is the Church, Col.* 1. 24. He that mulcts the more *indeliberate* Oaths, may yet enjoyn a ſolemn Perjury: And if I chuſe he ſhould rather make havock of my *goods* than my Conſcience; my *ſpoils* become not more monuments of his *rapine* than my *piety*; they plead my *innocence* bejore him who *will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain*: And how profanely ſoever my *wealth* is diſpos'd by him that ſeizes it, 'tis accounted to me as caſt into the *treaſury*; and ſo 'tis poſſible I may at once vie with the *rich men* in the greatneſs of the oblation, and with the *poor Widow* too in that higher circumſtance of its being all. In ſumm, the opportunities of *Martyrdom* are not reſtrained to thoſe points wherein *Chriſtians* differ from *Jews* or *Heathens*, but extend to all wherein we Chriſtians differ from our rule, the commands of our bleſſed Maſter. If I ſuffer for my *conſtancy* to any of them, I have certainly my place in *God's Martyrologie*, as well as if I had faln under any of the *ten Perſecutions*. God was not ſo partial to the *primitive Chriſtians* as to allow them the *Monopoly* and encloſure of that dignity; if *they* as our *elder brethren* had a *double portion*, yet there is ſtill a *child's part* left for every one of us, enough to teſtifie our *legitimation*, and ſecure us from the brand of *baſtardy*, *Heb.* 12. 'Twas *S. Paul*'s indefinite affirmation, and all times ſince have born witneſs to the truth of it; That *all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution*. Some *unfaſhionable vertues* there have been in every age, which have whetted, if not the *Swords*, yet the *Tongues* of men: And thoſe that happen not to fall under *Abel*'s perſecution, muſt not hope to eſcape that of *Iſaac*: If they meet with no *Cain* to *kill*, they will undoubtedly with an *Iſhmael* to *mock* them. But in what dreſs ſoever our *ſufferings* appear, a *good cauſe* diveſts them of their *frightful ſhape*, pulls off the *ugly vizard*, and ſhews us a *beauty* that lay there conceal'd; and that not only to the Eye of our *faith*, but our reaſon too. *Fortitude* was a *vertue* before *Chriſtianity* had a name in the world; and the very inſtinct of our *nature whiſpers* within us, the *baſeneſs* of being baffled out of a Truth or Vertue; yet ſuch a deſpicable *coward* is every man that wants this *paſſive valour*, without which the *active* muſt find another name; Rage or Frenzy, it may be, in ſome perhaps natural *courage*, or ſanguineneſs of temper in others, but true Valour it is not, if it knows not as well to *ſuffer* as to *do*. That mind is truly great, and only that which ſtands above the *power* of all *extrinſick violence*; which keeps it ſelf a diſtinct *principality* independant upon the outward man, ſo that it is not ſubjected to its fate; that can be *free*, when the body is faſt *bound* in Miſery and Iron, *ſound* and *healthy*, when that groans under torture, and is never more ſtrong and vital, than when that *languiſhes* and *expires*; and this is ſo deſireble, ſo tranſcendant a *privilege*, as *reaſon* cannot but *aſpire to*: And this is it to which this excellent *precept* of Chriſt advances us when we thus *ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake*, our minds are all *light*, what *darkneſs* ſoever involve our exterior part, and is like *Goſhen*, exempt and ſecure, when that falls under all the Plagues of *Egypt*.

Rewards and threatnings great motives to obedience.

26. And what Reaſon thus embraces for it ſelf, 'tis not imaginable that it ſhould reject, becauſe 'tis richly clad; that the race ſhould ſeem the more tedious, becauſe there is a Crown within view; or that the glorious *rewards* our Chriſtianity propoſes to our conſtancy, ſhould be eſteemed as *menaces* and *threats*, Temptations to deſert, or turn Apoſtates. No certainly, Reaſon cannot diſpute, and make an *inference* ſo utterly *illogical*, but will rather uſe it as an *enforcement* of its former *concluſion*, eſtabliſh it the more firm and immovable by having the *baſis* thus enlarged, having reward added to *vertue*, and happineſs entail'd on *duty*. If in the competi-

tion between two Evils, *reaſon* pronounce the *leſſer eligible*: Much more will ſhe reſolve, when the conteſt is 'twixt *good* and *evil*, the greateſt Evil and the greateſt Good; and chuſe that *excellence* which though *ſuperlative* in it ſelf, is more endear'd and heightned by *compariſon*. If I violate my *reaſon*, if I renounce *vertue*, though bare and naked, then ſurely I do it yet more when ſhe is thus *accompliſht* and adorn'd; when *beautified* on purpoſe to allure the *eye*, and take the *heart*. When over and above the poſitive donation of Happineſs, ſhe adds a reſcue and releaſe from *miſery*, and equally obliges by the diſtant proſpects of a Hell and Heaven. So that not only the *Goſpel-promiſes*, but even *menaces* and *threats* become a *weapon* in the hand of *reaſon*, when ſhe ſtands upon her *guard*, and fights for *vertue*. If *ſin* preſent it ſelf as my *Protector* from a *temporal* Calamity, *reaſon* will tell me hence, that the proffer is inſidious, it expoſes me to that which is *infinitely worſe* than what it pretends to ſave me from; and that not only in the former reſpect of Guilt, but in that of puniſhment alſo. What a cheat is it to keep me out of the *dungeon*, and ſend me to the *bottomleſs pit*; to ſave me from a *temporary fire*, and thereby mark me out as Fuel for *eternal flames*; to take me out of their *hands* who can *kill the body*, to put me into *his* who can *deſtroy both ſoul and body in Hell*? *Reaſon* tells me I am to abhor the *turpitude* and *foulneſs* of a Crime; and it tells me too, I am to dread the *miſery* and Smart of it alſo. It would not have me wallow in the *mire*, though it were *ſafe*, much leſs when it is full of *Aſps* and *Vipers*, which will infallibly ſting me to death. It cries out with *Joſeph*, *How ſhall I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* And it cries out with *Eſay* too, *Who can dwell with everlaſting fire*? In a word, by the domeſtick native *light* of the *candle of the Lord* ſet up within our *breaſt*, it ſhews the uglineſs of *ſin*; and ſhews it too by the affrightful diſmal *blaze* of thoſe *unquenchable flames* it kindles: Thus by the different *arguments* of terror and endearment, of love and fear, of intereſt and duty, *reaſon* aſſerts this ſcorn'd decried neglected *Precept*: Take her as mere *Paynim* abſtracting from the expectation of reward or puniſhment; or take her as a *Proſelyte* to Chriſt, contemplating his promiſes and threats, if there be *honeſty*, or if there be *religion*, in either inſtance the Soul muſt ſtill conclude, that *Affliction is to be choſen rather than Iniquity*.

Reaſonableneſs of ſelf-denial.

27. And if it be reaſonable thus to *reſiſt even unto blood ſtriving againſt ſin*, if *reaſon* blow the *trumpet*, ſound the *alarm* to this ſolemn *War*, then ſurely it preſcribes ſomething of *Martial diſcipline* to prepare and diſpoſe us for thoſe *combats*. No expert *General* will bring a company of raw untrain'd men into the *field*, but will by little bloodleſs skirmiſhes inſtruct them in the manner of the *fight*, teach them the ready managery of their *weapons*; and of this ſort are all thoſe *voluntary ſelf-denials*, and lighter auſterities which Chriſtianity commends to us, which become neceſſary not ſimply for themſelves, but as inſtruments towards a higher end. The Military fame the *Romans* had in the world was atchieved by the exact diſcipline of their Camps, inuring their Souldiers to labour and hardſhip. And, as *Tacitus* tells us, when a *long peace* had ſlacken'd the reins of diſcipline, that *active humour*, which was wont to be ſpent on the Enemy, recoil'd, and flew in the face of their Commanders, begat nothing but *mutinies* and diſorders; and certainly 'twill be the ſame in our *Chriſtian warfare*, if we abandon our ſelves to Eaſe and Sloth, never attempt to wreſtle with a difficulty, but keep our ſelves in the poſture the *Iſraelites* Camp was in at *Moſes*'s deſcent from the Mount, *eating and drinking, and riſing up to play*; our appetites will grow licentious and inſolent, paſt our controul and guidance.

dance. If we treat them with ſuch an indulgence as is recorded of *David* to *Adonijah*, never ſay ſo much as, *Why haſt thou done this?* 'Tis not to be expected but they will rebel, though a *Solomon* ſit in the *Throne*. For alas, how is it imaginable, that he who never denied himſelf any the *ſmalleſt* or *moſt trifling pleaſure* he had a mind to, ſhall on a ſudden deny *all in the groſs?* He who has projected *many*, but never wav'd *one* Opportunity of ſhewing his *wit*, how ſhall he find in his heart to become a *fool for Chriſt?* He that has gratified his *palate* with all that pretends to be guſtful to it, how ſhall he deſcend to the *bread of affliction?* or he that never tried to miſs a Meal, how will he entertain the unwelcome contrariety of not knowing where to get one? He who has never abated any thing of the utmoſt *pomp* he could reach, how will he brook the *want of neceſſaries*; or from his Houſe ceil'd with *Cedar*, and painted with *Vermilion*, be content with his *Saviour*'s Lot, *not to have where to lay his head?* In ſhort, how ſhall he who never could pare off any of the *excreſcencies*, the more *vanities* and *gayeties* of an eſtate, part with it *all*; or lay down that *life for Chriſt's ſake*, from which he never ſubſtracted one ſmalleſt *pleaſure?* *Suffering* is a thing to which the *ſenſitive* part of us have an Innate *averſion*, and Averſions are not to be ſubdued at once, but by gentle and eaſie *degrees*; and cuſtom muſt have introduced a ſecond nature, before that original part of our temper will be ſupplanted. As it is therefore highly reaſonable for every man to aſpire to the *dominion* of himſelf, to keep his *affections* within his own *power* and *command*; and though he have no *intereſt* at all in the *greater*, enjoy a ſoveraignty in the *leſſer* World: So in order to that, it is as reaſonable to diſcipline and tame them by ſome voluntary *acts* of *reſtraint*, like *Hannibal*, ſometimes to *paſs by that water to which his thirſts do moſt importunately invite him.* To try by little *skirmiſhes* what ſtrength and skill he has, before he runs the fatal hazard of a *battel*. To deny himſelf in the leſſer inſtances, that ſo when the greater come, they may not have the *diſadvantage* of Uncouthneſs and perfect Strangeneſs, to enhance their *difficulty*. And this muſt certainly be acknowledged *reaſonable*, or elſe we muſt condemn almoſt all the received *rules* of *humane tranſactions*, which generally have this for their *ground-work*, that men muſt paſs through the *firſt principles* and *loweſt rudiments* of any Art, before they can arrive at its height. Men ſerve *Apprenticeſhips* to Trades, and think not themſelves the firſt day *Maſters* of their craft; we advance in *learning* by leiſurable and ſlow ſteps, and skip not from the *A B C* to the *Metaphyſicks*: And certainly the skill of *Chriſtian ſuffering* is not the eaſieſt of all *Trades* or *Sciences*; but will require ſome time of *Initiation*, many repeated Tryals and Eſſays to bring us into an acquaintance with it: To convince our *underſtandings* and perſwade our *wills*, that *to loſe our lives is to ſave them*; and *to be faithful unto the death*, is the beſt way *to gain a crown of life*.

And all other inſtances of our Duty

28. If I ſhould now proceed to every other *precept* of Chriſt, and examine it by the *rules* of *ſober diſcourſe*, we ſhould infallibly find them ſo rational as befits the Laws of *him* who is the *eternal reaſon*; but having made theſe *eſſays* in ſome of the moſt oppos'd Inſtances, I ſhall preſume theſe may paſs as the *repreſentatives* of *all* the reſt; and the acquittal theſe have received at the Tribunal of Reaſon vertually involve them all.

atteſted beſt by experience.

29. And now ſince both *conſcience* and *reaſon* have pronounced the ſame of Chriſt's *Laws*, that *Pilate* did of his *Perſon*, that *they find in them no fault at all*; methinks *Judges* ſhould have the ſame *privilege* that is allowed to *private men*, that *in the mouth of two every word may be eſtabliſhed*: But if any man be ſo ſcrupulous as not to reſt in the ſentence of *leſs* than

a *Triumvirate*, let him *in God's name* bring in a *third*, and when his vicious *appetites* (which were before excepted to as parties) are ſet aſide, he cannot be diſtracted in his *choice*, there being but *one* more that can poſſibly be call'd in, and that is *experience*, which being a *Judge* that himſelf muſt create, he cannot fear it ſhould be prejudic'd againſt him; ſo that he may entertain full confidence of its *integrity*: And no leſs may he do of its *ability*, this being the moſt infallible of humane determinations, ſuch as often corrects the *error* of *ſpeculation*; and ſhews us the vanity of *concluding* what is *practicable in matter* from being *demonſtrated in the Scheme* or *Diagram*; The *guidance* of an *illiterate Traveller* in the way that he has gone, being far more uſeful to a *ſtranger* in his journey, than the beſt *Maps* and moſt exact *deſcriptions* of *Geographers*. But then it muſt be indeed *experience*, and not only ſome ſlight and tranſient Eſſay. We call not him an *experienc'd Phyſician* that has had *one Patient*, or a *Lawyer* that has pleaded *one Cauſe*. *Experience* is the *daughter* of *time*, and is made up of many *ſucceſſive tryals*, as a *habit* is of *multiplied acts*: And to the *verdict* of ſuch an Experience Chriſt's *precepts* will not fear to *ſtand*; let a man put himſelf into a ſettled courſe of *obedience* to them, abſtain ſo long from all *prohibited commiſſions*, as may wear out the *rank taſte* wherewith his *palate* has been ſeaſoned, and leave it free and diſengag'd, and then infallibly he will find ſuch a *ſavour* and *ſweetneſs* in thoſe *vertues*, that he will wonder how he came to be cheated into an *opinion* of their being *bitter* and *unſavoury*; and will have no *appetite* to *return to his Onions and his Garlick*, after he has thus been fed with *Quails* and *Manna*. That this will be the *event* of this *experiment* there is all *ground of certainty*, and when the *tryal* is once made, ſo irrefragable an *evidence* will follow, that it will not leave a man the *power to doubt*: Only in the *interim* ſo much *belief* is requiſite, as may let him into the *demonſtration*, make him ſet to that practice from whence he is to reap all *this*: And if any man be ſo much a *Sceptick*, as not to have *faith* enough to put him on the *adventure*, I ſhould at once for his *conviction* and *puniſhment*, wiſh but that he might a-while extend the ſame *diſtruſt* to affairs of *common life*: Let him doubt whether his *meat* be ſavoury, and *refuſe to eat*; whether his *cloaths* be warm, and ſo *go naked*; whether his *houſe* be firm, and *lye without doors*: And when he has a-while thus ſmarted under his own *diſcipline*, let him but apply the *wiſdom* he has thus bought to the preſent *inſtance*, and it will unqueſtionably reſolve his *ſcruple*; or if he be ſtill too impatient to attend the ripening of his own Experience, let him make uſe of other men's. Let him appeal to any who has inur'd his *neck* to Chriſt's *yoke*, and ask him whether it be *galling* and *pinching*, or whether it be not *eaſie*, nay, *gracious*. Let him ask one who by repeated reſtraints hath ſubdued and tamed his *natural rage* or *pride*, how he likes the *change*, and undoubtedly he will tell him, 'tis no leſs *happy* than a *calm* is after the noiſe and danger of a violent *tempeſt*, or the eaſe of a broken *impoſthume* after the painful gathering and filling of it. Let him ask one who has diveſted himſelf of all his *ſenſual ſins*, whether by their *abſence* he now diſcern not their *neceſſity*, and he will tell them, 'tis but the ſame the *primitive Chriſtians* had of thoſe *beaſts skins* wherein their *perſecutors* had clad them, whoſe only uſe was by *deforming* to fit them for *devouring*. Let him come to the converted *Mammoniſt*, and ask him, which he finds the better *treaſury*, his *own* Coffer, or the poor man's Bowels, and he will be able to aſſure him he is become *much richer* by having *leſs in ſtore*. Let him come to the devout *Aſcetick*, and ask him what *taſte* he finds in *Daniel*'s unpleaſant *bread*, *Dan.* 10. 3. and he will tell him *infinitely more* than ever he did in *Dives*'s *delicious fare*; that cloyed and ſurfeited the fleſh, this nouriſhes and ſupports the ſpirit. Nay finally, Let him come to him that is actually *ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake*, and he will exemplifie to him the *beatitude* which Chriſt has pronounced of ſuch: Let him viſit *Paul* and *Silas* in the *Priſon*, and he ſhall hear them *ſinging*: *Peter* and the other *Apoſtles* after their *ſtripes* and beating, and he ſhall find them *rejoycing*; And *Stephen*, amidſt the Throng of his *murderers*, and Tempeſt of their *ſtones*, and he ſhall obſerve him overlooking them all, and entertaining himſelf with a more *pleaſant proſpect*, ſeeing the *Heavens open'd and Jeſus ſtanding at the right hand of God*; and why ſhould not other men's ſucceſſes animate our endeavours here? In temporal affairs it ſeldom miſſes to do it. The Trophies of *Miltiades* at *Marathon* diſturb'd *Themiſtocles* his ſleeps, till he had rais'd unto himſelf and *Country* more glorious ones at *Salamine*; *Cæſar* while he views *Alexander*'s Image upbraids his own ſlackneſs with the memory of his conqueſts, and inſpirits himſelf to great attempts. He that returns with a *rich fraight* from a *new-found-Land*, encourages others to Trade *thither* alſo: Nay, even a *beggar* ſpeeds not well at an *Hoſpital door*, but he is able to ſend *ſholes* upon the like hopes: Much leſs does he that has found a *treaſure* need to uſe his *Oratory* to invite *partakers*; and why then ſhould thoſe *few* that have made this more precious *diſcovery* be forced to *monopolize* it, as not being able *to draw in partners*? Yet God knows, thus it is; Thoſe that hear of no *rarity* but they long for it, as *David* after the waters of *Bethlehem*, can yet hear the ſame *David* cry out, *how ſweet the Lord is!* and yet have no curioſity to taſte it: Thoſe whom the very name of *Liberty* ſo captivates, that they ſacrifice all that is really valuable to that *Chimæra*; can hear the *Apoſtle* ſpeak of the *glorious liberty of the Sons of God*, and yet like hardned *Gally-ſlaves*, deſpiſe the *Manumiſſion*. Thoſe that hunt after *pleaſures* till the very *purſuit* become an unſupportable *pain*, can be told of thoſe *rivers of pleaſures* wherewith God offers to quench their thirſt, and yet inflict on themſelves the *rich man's torment*, and deny ſo much as to *dip the tip of their finger* towards the *cooling* their own *flames*. Good God! What ſtrange *infatuation* is this, that while there is ſo much of *vicious envy* in the World, there ſhould be nothing of *vertuous emulation*? That men's heat and vigour ſhould all ſpend it ſelf in childiſh purſuits, and leave them thus cold and ſtupid to their great and *ſerious* concernments? and what remains to him that ponders this *Epidemick* folly, but to breath out *Moſes*'s Wiſh; *O that men were wiſe*; or if that be too hopeleſs a vote; *O that men were not ſo deſtructively fooliſh*; that their raſhneſs and error might be confined to their lower intereſts, And as *fools* are treated, *be kept from dealing in things of conſequence*; That they would not govern their Souls by ſuch an abſurd kind of managery, as they will not truſt with the meaneſt of their outward concerns. And if this might be obtain'd, if this *fatal Oſcitancy* which has benumb'd and frozen them were but *caſt off*, they would then from the report of the *good land* be animated to their *journey*; and rather chuſe to make the concurrent teſtimonies of others arguments to encourage them. than *leave* them as Hand-writings to *appeal*, or Witneſſes to *condemn* them, And he that ſhall thus borrow other men's *experience* with this *deſign* of *copying it out*, and lays it as a foundation for his own, thereby poſſeſſes himſelf of one of the greateſt *advantages* of the *communion of Saints*; kindles himſelf at their fire till he grows bright and hot at it; combines his *flame* with theirs, and ſo encreaſes the Ardors of them both; follows Example till himſelf grows exemplary, and in one Act *receives* and *gives*. But he that thus ſets out, muſt remember, that it is more than the journey of one day he has to go; he muſt not think (as I ſaid before) that every little *ſuperficial attempt* is that Experience which he is in queſt of: He that thus fancies will be expoſed to a very dangerous deceit, for it is ſure there is in all habits ſuch a *force*, that they are not to be diſpoſſeſt but by a contrary violence, and therefore he that has been under the power of any vicious *cuſtom*, enters at firſt into a ſtate of *hoſtility*, has ſuch a tough *oppoſition*, as rather finds him Work than Pleaſure: Now if he ſhall upon this firſt Eſſay pronounce, he is like to paſs a very *unjuſt ſentence*: Let him fight on a while, till he have got ſome ground, and then, though the War afforded him *little* pleaſure, the Victory will yield him *much*. Every repeated defeat he gives his Adverſary will be a new triumph to him, and what the *Romans* courted as ſo great a dignity, he may every day *enjoy*. But then as he advances farther to the compleating of his *victories*, ſo he does of his Pleaſures too. When his irregular *appetites* are ſo ſubdued, that they rarely make *inſurrection*, this is ſuch a ſtate of *tranquility* as gives him leiſure to diſcern, and enjoy the delights of Chriſtian vertue, and will teach him to reproach the higheſt *Panegyrick* he ever heard of it, as flat and imperfect: So infinitely will he find it exceed the utmoſt deſcription, that he will ſay with the Queen of *Sheba*, *the one half was not told him*. This is the rich prize which they ſhall obtain that *run* the race, but it is not awarded to the *firſt ſtep*; and hence it is ſo many fail of it, that when they find the uneaſineſs which attends the breaking off a *cuſtom*; this is ſuch a *Gyant*, a Son of *Anak*, as turns them back diſcouraged from the *Canaan* they went to view. But alas, this diſcovers how ſmall a ſtock of Reſolution they carried out with them; for where men ſet out with *heart* and *appetite*, 'tis not ſuch little *difficulties* that will diſmay them: If it be but their *ſports* they are engag'd in, it ſerves to deceive the ſenſe of many uneaſineſſes, nay, often dangers; he that is but in chaſe of a ſilly *Hare*, is ſo keen upon it, that he feels not the wearineſs of a whole days motion, and if he meet with a *hedge* in his way, will rather leap it with *hazard*, than be diverted from his Game. But 'tis ſure in their ſins they ſuffer far greater hardſhips without diſcouragement. The puny *drunkard* is not diſheartned by the *firſt qualm*, but repeats his *exceſſes* till he have overcome his *queaſineſs*. The caſt *Litigant* ſits not down with one *croſs verdict*, but re-commences his *ſuit*, paſſes it through all *Courts*, and conſiders not his own *pains*, ſo he may either weary or force the other out of his *right*. The *unclean perſon* falls not out with his ſin, how ſadly ſoever it hath macerated him, but ſteps out of the *hot-houſe* into the *Stews*. And ſhall men be ſo indefatigable in their purſuits of *infelicity*, buy one *torment* with another, and drive on the year in a circle of ſuch woful Traffick, and ſhall *vertue* and *pleaſure* be thought not worth the ſmalleſt *labour*? Can they keep themſelves in a perpetual *contention* with their *eaſe*, their *reaſon* and their *God*; and can they not endure a ſhort *combate* with a ſinful *cuſtom*? which if it have ſome *uneaſineſs*, yet 'tis both infinitely ſhort of what they have ſuffered in the contrary compliance, and beſides carries its *remedy* in its hand: For if the Difficulty ariſe only (as doubtleſs it does) from the confirmedneſs of the Habit, every Act of reſiſtance, as it weakens the Habit, ſo it abates the Difficulty. It is therefore a moſt unreaſonable *inference*, from the *trouble* of the firſt oppoſition, to conclude the *impoſſibility* of the future; for if the *firſt* were but troubleſome, and not impoſſible, the *ſecond* will have yet leſs of the trouble, and ſo be yet farther removed from the impoſſibility; and the *third* than the *ſecond*, and ſo on till the difficulty vaniſh and diſappear. And if men would but aſſume ſuch a *moderate courage*, as but to *keep the field*, and not to run away upon the firſt gun-ſhot, they would ſoon find how impotent aſſailants they had to deal with, who can never ſubdue any man by *ſtrength*, who is not firſt emaſculated by his own *fears*. Let us therefore, to ſhun the report of ſo diſhonourable a Defeat, awake and rouze our ſelves, put us in a poſture of defence: And Satan, who is as cowardly as any thing in the World but we, *will*, as S. *James* aſſures us, *flee from us*. Let us upbraid our ſelves with our unſeaſonable hardineſs and reſolution in our impieties, till we have changed the ſcene, grow impatient of thoſe ſervile drudgeries, and ambitious of theſe honourable adventures. And to animate us the more, let us fix our eyes upon the glorious prize of the victory; and that not only the final and eternal in future Glory, but that intermediate which offers itſelf as the earneſt of that, the calm and pleaſure of a conquering piety. The *Roman* ſtory tells us, that the *Flavianiſts* had ſo poſſeſt their minds with the ſpoils of *Vienna*, that they grew inſenſible of all dangers in the way to it, and even forc'd their General *Antonio* to put them upon thoſe hazards which his wiſer conduct would have declined. And why ſhould not our more worthy hopes excite as great an earneſtneſs? Why ſhould not we have as great an appetite to the pillaging of *Satan*'s Camp, plundring that infernal *Magazine* of all its Engines both of *mine* and *battery*, its ſtore of arms and ammunition, leaving him naked and defenceleſs, unable to make any impreſſion upon us? And this he certainly does, who by a ſteddy practice of *Vertue*, comes to diſcern the contemptibleneſs of thoſe baits wherewith he allures us. He that ſeeks only the praiſe of God, looks upon the applauſe of Men as a blaſt of Air, which poſſibly may demoliſh and deſtroy a glorious building, but cannot give foundation or materials to it; and therefore will not ſeek for, or ſollicit its unhappy courtſhips. He who deſires to be great only in the Kingdom of Heaven, laughs at the buſie aſpirings of ſecular greatneſs, and wonders at the force of that enchantment, which engages men with ſo extream toil, to climb a tottering Pinacle, where the ſtanding is uneaſie, and the fall deadly. He that covets to be rich towards God, and has inur'd his eyes to that divine ſplendor which reſults from the beauty of Holineſs, is not dazled with the glittering ſhining of Gold; conſiders it as a vein of the ſame earth he treads on, and deſpiſes that abſurd partiality whereof the Prophet accuſes Idolaters, to employ one part to the meaneſt uſes, and fall down to the other. In a word, He that looks on the *eternal things that are not ſeen*, will through thoſe opticks exactly diſcern the vanity and inconſiderableneſs of all that is viſible and temporary; and ſo will be equally unmoved with the terrors or allurements of the World, and neither frighted nor flattered out of his duty. And he that is thus fortified, diſcourages and wearies out his Tempter, deprives him not only of *weapons* but of *heart* too, and drives even *Satan* himſelf to deſperation; and when the Enemy is thus beat out of the field, there remains nothing but to enjoy the *victory*. When that reluctance and reſiſtance of the *corrupt appetite* is ſo weaken'd and ſubdu'd, that a man acts with freedom, he acts with pleaſure too. A heart thus ſet at liberty, alacriouſly *runs the ways of God's Commandments*: It faring with it as with a Patient that is preſcribed *exerciſe* for *health*; who at firſt perhaps finds laſſitude and trouble in it: But when the *obſtructions* are removed, and *nature* diſburthened of thoſe noxious humours that encumbred her, that which was at firſt his *task*, becomes his *recreation*. For we are not to think, that it is any innate harſhneſs in piety that renders the firſt eſſays of it unpleaſant; that is owing only to the indiſpoſedneſs of our own hearts. We are in the Prophet's phraſe, *bullocks unaccuſtomed to the yoke*; and if we be galled and fretted by it, 'tis becauſe of our impatient ſtrivings, and irregular motions under it, the yoke is really no heavier than it is afterwards, when it is more tamely born; and yet the Eaſe is very different and unequal. And this teaches us a ſhort way to that felicity we now ſpeak of, to wit, That we compoſe our ſelves to ſuch a ſubmiſs and malleable temper, that Chriſt may come only to govern us as *ſheep*, not to be put to tame us as *Tigers*. Let us withdraw all ſupplies from our *luſts*, and not by any ſecret reſerved affection give them clancular aids to maintain their *Rebellion*, and then they will not be able long to make any *vigorous oppoſition*, nor conſequently much to diſturb the *tranquility* of thoſe who have thus reſigned themſelves to the government of the *Prince of Peace*: And if this cannot be done in ſuch an inſtant, but that there will be ſome previous diſplacencies, and uneaſie ſtrugglings, yet even thoſe like the *Scorpion* carry an *Antidote* againſt their own *ſtings*, when 'tis conſidered, that they are but the *pangs* of the *new birth*, they will become very ſupportable by the expectation of that joy to which they tend. An enſlaved people think themſelves fairly advanc'd to happineſs, if they can get but to make head againſt their oppreſſors, though they muſt expect many ſore *conflicts*, and ſharp *engagements* before they become *Victors*: And certainly 'tis matter of ineſtimable joy to him, who has been under that ſad ſpiritual ſlavery, to be ſet thus upon even terms, with his ſword in his hand againſt thoſe, who once had him in ſuch vaſſalage, that he durſt not lift up a thought againſt them; but eſpecially when 'tis remembred with what *invincible aids* he is backt, ſuch as will aſcertain him of *victory* if he do not treacherouſly defeat himſelf. And ſurely he muſt be of a ſtrange *phlegmatick temper*, whom all theſe conſiderations will not enliven, convey into him ſo much ſpirit as to make an attempt, and engage him to do that upon ſo preſſing, ſo great a concern which meer curioſity prompts men daily to in common affairs. And he that is not moulded of this cold and ſtubborn clay, he that has not loſt one of the *elements* of man's compoſition, and has but a *ſpark* of *fire* in his temper, will ſurely have ſome *warmth* towards this ſo inviting an *experiment*: And when he has once made it, I doubt not, it will then joyn with the ſuffrages both of reaſon and conſcience in approbation of *Chriſt's Laws*, and will with *Solomon* pronounce of this ſpiritual wiſdom, *her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace*, *Prov.* 3. 17.

Contradicted unjuſtly by the wicked and profane.

30. And now it muſt be a ſtrange *violence* of impiety, that muſt break this *threefold cord*, that ſhall diſannul the joint *ſentence* of all that are competent *Judges* in this matter. This is not the ſtrength of *Sampſon* that *brake withs and cords*, but of the *Legion* that *pull'd in pieces fetters and chains*; and though too many men make it their *own work*; yet certainly, 'tis only the *Devil's intereſt*: He aſpires to the rule and government of us; and to that end nothing can be more contributive, than theſe prejudices we take up againſt Chriſt's conduct. A *Soul* like a *Nation*, can neither bear *two Legiſlators*, nor be without *one*: And *Satan* having but that ſingle competitor, our quarrelling with Chriſt's Laws, is vertually an embracing of his. When we ſend *Chriſt* that rebellious meſſage, *Nolumus hunc regnare*, we ſay to the other as the *Trees* to the *Bramble*, *Judg.* 9. 14. *come thou and reign over us.* And to this defiance of the one, and invitation of his oppoſite, he very nearly approaches, that thus defames Chriſt's commands as irrational or ſevere. The traducing of a government being, we know, the immediate *præludium* to the caſting it off; *libelling* the forlorn-hope to Rebellion. But would God men would ſoberly weigh whither ſuch a mutinous humor tends, and when our outward *condition* has given us ſo many pregnant and coſtly *proofs* of its ruinous *effects*, take caution that it make not

the like wrack within us : That we do not madly exchange Chriſt's *gentle ſervice*, and *glorious rewards*, for Satan's *cruel bondage*, and crueller Wages : The *golden chains* of the one which do more adorn than tie us, for the *Iron*, the *Adamantine* link of the other, which bind us till they deliver us over to thoſe *Chains of darkneſs*, where our captivity ſhall be irreverſible. If this ſo reaſonable, ſo neceſſary a care may be admitted ; 'twill certainly confute the profane *ſophiſtry* of our Age, ſilence our impious *cavils*, and inſtead of providing us of the colour of an auſtere *Maſter* to excuſe our *ſloth*, will engage us to that *diligence* that ſhall ſuperſede the uſe of ſuch *ſhifts*, and then we may hope to ſee *Chriſtianity* have a *Reſurrection-day* again, aſſume a Body ſomewhat of ſolidity and ſubſtance ; which now wanders about like a *ghoſt* or *ſpectre*, a *ſhade* or vaniſhing *apparition*, which leaves no footſteps behind it: And to the re-union, O let us all emulouſly contribute, take up every one of us his dry *bones*, and bring them to the *Prophet*, or rather to *Him* who ſpake by that Prophet, to breath upon them, till at laſt they be cemented and inſpirited in active *duty*, to ſhew forth the *Praiſes of that God who hath called us out of darkneſs into his marvellous light*, 1 Pet. 2. 9.

CHAP. VI.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Partial Obedience.

Partial Conſideration diſcovered by

1. ANother ſort of prepoſterous Conſiderers there are, by whom the *power and force of Chriſtianity* is no leſs obſtructed : And thoſe are they that contrive not how they may moſt *comply* with *it*, but how they may beſt bend it to *comport* with *them*. That rebate its edge, or turn it only againſt ſuch of their corruptions as they have leaſt kindneſs for. That weigh the *Precepts* with no other deſign but that of taking the *lighteſt* : Thoſe to which their conſtitutions or other circumſtances carry leaſt repugnance ; and come unto the *Goſpel* not as to a *Law*, but to a *Market* ; cheapen what they beſt like, and leave the reſt for other cuſtomers.

Partial and unequal Obedience,

2. That thus it is with many, needs no other proof than the variety viſible in the lives of ſeveral Profeſſors. *One* man behaves himſelf *modeſtly*, and tells you his *religion* commands him *humility* ; yet at the ſame time tranſgreſſes the as ſtrict precept of Juſtice, and will defraud him he bows to. On the contrary, *another* is Juſt, but Inſolent, and though his Sentence do not bend, expects his *Clients* ſhould. That man owns the purity of his Religion in *viſiting the fatherleſs and widows*, yet diſclaims it again, by not *keeping himſelf unſpotted of the world.* This perſon is Abſtemious, but Uncharitable, will drink no *wine*, but thirſts for *blood*. He prays much, yet curſes more ; whileſt he is meek, but indevout. Now while the Rule is one and the ſame, how ſhould it come, that men's Practices ſhould ſo vary, were it not for the unequal Application ; Did they take it entire, though there might be difference in the *degrees*, yet ſure not in the *kinds* of their Vertues, and as men would not differ ſo from one another, ſo neither would they from themſelves ; there would be then no ſuch thing as a *charitable* Drunkard, a *devout* Oppreſſor, a *chaſt* Miſer ; Monſters engendered by this unnatural commixture of *light* with *darkneſs* ; but *Piety* would be uniform and extenſive, and *bring into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Chriſt*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. And till it be thus, Chriſtianity can never be thought to have atchieved any part of its deſign, which was not aim'd againſt any one *ſingle limb*, but againſt the *whole body* of ſin. Alas! 'tis not

the lopping off one of the remote *members*, that will render the remaining ones any whit the leſs vital; the having a part leſs to animate, will rather ſerve to concenter the ſpirits, and make them more active in the reſt: As we ſee the *pruning* of Trees makes them more *prolifick*. And this effect is very obvious among men: He who has no general diſlike to vice, if he repudiate *one*, 'tis common that he may cleave cloſer to *another*; and what he defaulks from ſome *dry*, *inſipid* ſin, is but to make up a *Benjamin*'s Meſs for ſome other more guſtful. If the Wanton be *ſober*, 'tis odds he thinks *exceſs* a Rival to his *luſts*; if the Proud man be *liberal*, 'tis becauſe *covetouſneſs* is inglorious; ſuch unevenneſſes are caus'd not by an *unkindneſs* to any Sin (unleſs poſſibly that averſion which natural conſtitution raiſes in ſome) but by a *partiality* to one or more favourite-Vices, for whoſe better *accommodation*, and *ſecurer reign*, not only Vertue, but other Vices alſo muſt give place.

which is the ſumm of many men's Religion,

3. And this, 'tis much to be fear'd will upon a true account, be found to be the *ſumm* of many men's *piety*, ſomething they think they muſt pay to the *importunity* of their Religion, which upbraids them ſo loudly, that they are willing to *ſtop its mouth*, but yet would do it with as much *frugality*, and good managery as may be, and ſo conſider what it is they can beſt ſpare; what refuſe Sin, which brings them in little of ſatisfaction, and is perhaps in competition with ſome other more agreeable: And this they can be content to devote to the *ſlaughter*, ſet it to receive all the *impreſſions of the ſword of the ſpirit*; and ſo uſe it as a *buckler* to their *darling luſts*, to ward off thoſe blows which muſt elſe fall heavy on them; but alas! this is not to *obey*, but to *delude*; to ranſome a *greater* Sin with a *leſs*, and to tranſcribe in this matter the Counſel of *Caiaphas*: To *let one die for the people*, *that the whole Nation periſh not*. To make one forlorn guilt a Patriot to the reſt, whileſt in the *tempeſt* which threatned a general *ſhipwrack*, the *precious wares* are preſerv'd by throwing the *leſs valuable* over-board.

and renders them ſecure and negligent in many Duties.

4. And truly that is commonly the event; men are ſo jolly and triumphant when they have worſted a *trivial inconſiderable ſin*, as if they had defeated the *whole Army*: This poor deſpicable *ſpoil* is ſet up as their *Trophy*, and muſt, they think, witneſs for them both to God and man, that they are *good ſouldiers of Jeſus Chriſt*: They can, like *Saul*, which full confidence meet the *Prophet*, and tell him they have *fulfilled the Commandment of the Lord*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 13. though *Agag* and the beſt *cattel*, the reigning and fatteſt *ſins* be ſpar'd: And while they are thus ſecure, their ſins will certainly be ſo alſo, have no diſturbance or diſquiet from them, but lie at eaſe and reſt, feed like *Cannibals* upon their own kind, be nouriſht by the carcaſſes of thoſe unlucky vices, on whom the exterminating lot happened to fall; and by that means grow to a prodigious bulk and corpulency. And upon theſe terms *Satan* himſelf will allow us to *mortifie ſome ſins*, nay, will himſelf *caſt the firſt ſtone at them*: And like a rooking *gameſter*, purpoſely loſe theſe *petty ſtakes*, that he may afterwards ſweep the *board*.

Yet well conceited of their ſpiritual condition.

5. For if men ſhould give themſelves up univerſally to *all ſorts* of Ill, if they ſhould ſet themſelves in a total oppoſition to *all the documents* of their *profeſſion*, he would loſe one of his moſt uſeful *engines*; there could be no ſuch thing as a falſe deluſive hope, they might poſſibly by obſtinacy *harden*, or by diverſion *gag* Conſcience, but they could not bribe and corrupt it, make it ſit down well pleas'd and ſatisfied with its ſelf. For when the *threats* againſt diſobedience ſhall occur to the mind of one who has in all inſtances diſobeyed, 'tis impoſſible he ſhould find any *ſalve*, any way of evading the Thruſts, they make ſo directly at him: But he who can alledge

for himſelf that he *obeys in ſome things*, confronts that to all Objections, and reſolves he is not *in the liſt* of the *diſobedient* : One or two ſuch comfortable inſtances are as mighty, as God promis'd the *Iſraelites* ſhould be, *Deut.* 32. 30. *One able to chaſe a thouſand, and two to put ten thouſand to flight* ; all fears and miſgiving thoughts are diſſipated and fled before them : And as once the *French King* in his return to the numerous ſwelling titles of the *Spaniard*, thought the bare repetition of *France, France, France*, was a full ballance to them all ; ſo when *whole files* of great and ſcandalous Crimes preſent themſelves, *one ſingle vertue* is thought a ſufficient counterpoize. He whoſe Conſcience upbraids him with all profaneneſs towards *God*, and Inſobriety towards *himſelf* : Yet if he can but anſwer, that he is *juſt to his neighbour*, he thinks he has *quit ſcores*, and fears no other reckonings : He who is immerſt in all the filthineſs both of *fleſh and ſpirit*, has abandoned his Mind to *pride and envy*, his Body to *luſt and intemperance* ; and ſo ſacrificed both thoſe to *Devils* : Yet if he caſt but *ſome grains* of his eſtate upon the Altar ; devote any ſmall part of that to God, for the uſes of *Piety* or *Charity* ; he concludes that *Incenſe* will ſend up a Cloud thick enough to obſcure the other from the eyes of Divine Juſtice, and yield ſo ſweet a ſavour, as will perfume him in ſpight of all that Noiſomneſs : So extending old *Tobit*'s words beyond his meaning, That *Alms though alone, delivereth from death, and cleanſeth from all ſin.* He who is deep in *ſacrilege* and *rebellion*, that can daringly ſwallow repeated deliberate *perjuries* ; yet if he can get but the demure tenderneſs, to *fear a ſudden oath*, he is *Chymiſt* enough to extract a *confidence* out of that *fear*, and preſumes that *formal* Civility to God's name, ſhall expiate all the real Violations and Contempts of him : And while men make ſuch uſe of their *partial piece-meal* obedience, it can never be the *Devil's intereſt* to diſturb them *in* it, to awake them *out* of their pleaſant dream, or to exact *of* them to depoſite thoſe poor unſignificant *remains* of their Chriſtianity, which ſerve only to make them more *Supine*, not more *Safe*.

The Devils policy is to enſnare a Soul by a ſingle Luſt.

6. Nay, indeed his affairs are ſo ſtated, that to ſome he can and does, and without danger, allow a yet far *greater indulgence* ; he can permit them to bid much fairer than this for Heaven, and yet knows the purchaſe is far from being made ; he can ſee them caſhier not ſome one *ſingle ſin*, but *whole troops* together, and yet not fear the ſinking of his Cauſe : He can truſt them ſo far, that as the *young man* in the Goſpel, they may be pronounced, *Not far from the Kingdom of God* : Yet as long as there is but *one* unmortified Luſt, that can ſend them away *ſad from Chriſt*, his tenure is firm enough. *Herod may hear John Baptiſt gladly*, nay, do many things upon it, yet let him but keep *Herodias*, and ſhe will ſoon be able to ſecure both *her ſelf* and *Satan* againſt the danger of that Competition. This is indeed his main advantage, that he can hold faſt by the *ſmalleſt thread* ; and whereas to our bliſs a conſpiration and union of all Vertues is required ; our ruine can ſpring from any one ſolitary Crime : *Many rounds* make that Ladder wherewith we muſt ſcale *Heaven* : Whereas *one ſtep* ſerves to precipitate us into the *Abyſſe* ; ſo ſadly verifying the Poetical Axiom, *Facilis deſcenſus Averni.* In ſumm, while there is but *any one ſingle ſin* indulged to, that is the *Devil's tedder* ; and though it ſhould be imagined ſo looſe, as to give men ſcope to range over *all other ſorts* of Vertues, to taſte the ſweet, and feed liberally on them ; yet ſtill the *beaſt* is in the power of him who has fixt the line, not only to be finally led away to *ſlaughter*, but alſo to have the *length ſhortned*, and be either put out of the *reach*, or quite removed from the *view* of thoſe *pleaſant paſtures*.

whereby he is eaſily tempted to more and greater ſins.

7. For though the ſecurity raiſ'd by ſuch an uniform piety is in many ſo exactly apportioned to *Satan*'s *intereſt*, that he has no cauſe to wiſh the change of his tenure; yet where the circumſtances are ſuch, as will make it uſeful, he can eaſily twiſt his *thread* into a *Cable*. When he thinks one *Monarch* Luſt too mild a regiment, he can ſet up an *Athenian* Tyranny, or which is yet worſe, let in the whole *populacy* of Sin upon the Soul, which like the *Egyptian Locuſts* ſhall over-run and devour it, *not leave any green thing on the ground*; and that this is in his power we have too much reaſon to conclude. He is, we know, a cunning *ſophiſter*, and if he has abus'd us ſo far as to impoſe *one* ſin upon us, he may thence very regularly deduce *many more*; as one falſe *Premiſe* admitted, may be improved into *thouſands* of falſe Concluſions. Indeed ſuppoſing a man reſolute to adhere to one ſin, he may with very good *Logick* perſwade him to multitudes of others. There are but two *Objections* uſually made to any Temptation; either the *offence*, or the *danger*; and theſe are uſually objectable to one ſin as well as to another: So that this *dilemma* readily offers it ſelf: Either it is reaſonable to buy a pleaſure at that price, or it is not: If it be, then contrive that the crime be pleaſant, and that brings its *diſpenſation* with it: If it be not, then why doſt thou live in this one ſin in deſpight of both guilt and puniſhment? The *latter* part of the *dilemma*, 'tis no part of Satan's buſineſs to preſs; but the former he has too much advantage of purſuing ſucceſsfully; if he can but dreſs up a temptation to look invitingly, the buſineſs is done. So ridiculous a thing is an *uneven piety*, that it even laughs it ſelf out of countenance, and wants only temptation to become *uniform vice*. How abſurdly looks it, to ſee a man run away with *Joſeph* from the embraces of his *Miſtreſs*, and yet with full as great a ſpeed accompany *Gehaſi* in the purſuit of a *bribe*; and how obvious is it to conclude that the former aſſault was improſperous only becauſe not managed with the *right weapon*; that he might have been *hired*, that would not be *wooed*? What a *mockery* is it for a man to be *zealous for God*, and *rebellious againſt his King*? As in the reverſe, for a man to be *true to his King*, and a *rebel to his God*? And who can but think, that had either of the averted *Crimes* been cookt to their *Palats*, they might have changed *Meſſes*? Indeed 'tis not imaginable by what rules of diſcourſe, he that embraces *one ſin* ſhould reject *another*: If it be done only upon *fancy* and *humor*, as the *repulſt vice* will have reaſon to complain of great *partiality*, when as bad as it ſelf is received and cheriſhed; ſo it points out a way to attacque him more proſperouſly: Let it ſhape it ſelf to the fancy; and ſure *Satan*, who can *transform himſelf to an Angel of light*, can ſoon work that eaſie *change*: Let the *younger* Brother get on the cloaths of the favourite *Eſau*, transform it ſelf into the ſhape and intereſt of the darling ſin, and it need not doubt of a free *admiſſion*. But all this while to pretend *Conſcience* for ſuch an *abſtinence*, is of all other pleas the moſt abſurd; for why ſhould he ſcruple at one, that abandons himſelf to another? As *S. James* argues concerning the *guilt*, ſo may we for the *act* of Sin: He that ſaid, *Do not commit adultery*, ſaid alſo, *Do not kill*; and 'tis abuſive mockery, the Souldiers *Ave Rex*, to bow to his *authority* in the *one*, and reſiſt it in the *other*. Thus unhappy is the caſe of him who entertains one ſin, his encloſure is broken down, and he is a Common for all: He is left deſtitute of a reply to any temptation, and like a *baſhful* perſon, will be in danger of *yielding*, becauſe he is aſhamed to *deny*: And this, I doubt not, many have found experimentally true; ſome have ſins been committed not ſo much upon the force of inclination, as to be conſentaneous to themſelves, to ſilence the upbraidings of their underſtandings

for acting ſo unevenly, it being impoſſible to give a reaſonable account, why *this* and not *that*, or *that*; for when by *one bold wilful ſin* a man is enter'd into a *ſtate of hoſtility* with God, 'tis not a *tenderneſs in all others* will make up the *breach*: And then they think the rule of known enemies take place, where all civilities are diſclaim'd, and the quarrel managed to the moſt advantage. The reſolved *Adulterer* could perhaps without much *difficulty* be juſt; but when he conſiders that that one *Helena* of his will certainly make a war, he thinks 'tis an impertinent *niceneſs* to loſe a good prize, or diſmiſs his *covetouſneſs* while he reſolves to retain his *luſt*. The incorrigible *drunkard* could perchance eaſily enough be *chaſte*, but when he remembers that *drunkenneſs excludes him from the Kingdom of Heaven*: Having made that ſale of his eternal inheritance, he thinks 'tis but good husbandry to get as much as he can for it: So *treacherous a gueſt* is any *one Sin* admitted, and lodged in the heart, it deſpoils it of all its armour of defence, leaves it nothing wherewith to guard it ſelf againſt any aſſailant; and be it *never ſo ſmall* a one, 'tis like thoſe *little thieves*, which being put in at the window, ſet the doors open to all the reſt.

8. But perhaps this *danger* may be thought in ſome degree warded by the *natural temper* and conſtitution of men, which neceſſarily renders them unapt to *contradictory vices*, and ſo will ſecure them at leaſt from ſo many as are diſagreeable to their Temper: But if this ſhould be granted, yet it confeſſedly leaves them open to all others, and that were certainly bad enough: He that is as *wicked*, as his complexion cannot only incline, but permit him to be, will not want much of the utmoſt number of ſins: But whatever we can ſuppoſe that to ſtrike off from the tale; yet in the ſecond place, 'tis very much to be feared, that will defaulk nothing of the weight; he that ſins to the height of his *appetite*, perhaps *power*, ſhall he be ever the more *innocent*, becauſe there were ſome *nauſeated ſins*, which he had not Self-denial enough to commit? God abſolves us in proportion to the *rectitude* of our Wills, not the *niceneſs* of our Complexions: He that wills to purſue whatever he can find *guſtful*, how impious ſoever; ſhall it be *vertue* in him that ſome ſins are *unſavoury* and diſagreeing to his *Palate*? If it ſhould, there may ſo many extrinſick things be by Analogy brought in, either to ſwell or abate the accounts of our ſin, that we ſhall be much to ſeek in the eſtimate of it.

except ſuch as his natural complexion is averſe to,

9. But in the third place, even theſe very averſions are no infallible preſervative; for if they happen to be more moderate and remiſs than the love of ſome other ſin; that *predominant inclination* will ſubdue thoſe *diſlikes*, whenever its *intereſt* is to be ſerv'd by thoſe otherwiſe not *guſtful commiſſions*. There is nothing more ordinary than to ſee one appetite purſued to the violation of another. A man perhaps hates *drunkenneſs*, not only as a *beſtial* but uneaſie *vice*; yet if his *love* to gain exceed his *diſlike* to that; when that is requiſite to make up the price of a *good bargain*, that *averſion* muſt ſtoop, and give way. A man deſpiſes *ſwearing* as an *inſipid impertinent ſin*; yet if he ſet any great value upon *being in the mode*, and complying with the *genteel Dialect*, that will ſoon debaſe him to what he ſo much contemned: And truly there is ſcarce any other account to be given of that great and fooliſh ſin: But in no other inſtance is this ſo notoriouſly viſible, as in that of *Duelling*. I need not ſingle out any one man's particular *inclination*; the nature of mankind doth certainly avert both killing and being kill'd: Yet when that *Phantaſm*, that *Chimæra* Honour has once poſſeſt the mind, no reluctance of Humanity is able to make head againſt it; but it commands it uncontrouledly, as the *Centurion*

which the habit of other ſins will in time conquer and overcome, in the Goſpel, *ſays to this man go and he goes, to another, come and he comes*: Nay, as tyrannically as the great *Cham* of *Tartary*, who as an Eſſay of his Soveraignty *commands whole troops to ride down precipices*; nay, theſe averſions are not thus violently ſubdued by ſome foreign *luſt*, but are many times deſtroyed even by *force* of that very *vicious principle* which gave them *birth*; for we miſtake if we think they are always vertuous, or ſo much as innocently founded; Vice is often at civil wars with it ſelf; and the vehement inclination to one ingenders a *diſplacency* to another; but yet ſuch a *riddle* is this *myſtery of Iniquity*, that upon the very ſame baſis is built both the *abhorrence* and *commiſſion* of the ſame Sin. For *example*, a proud man as much hates to *fawn* and *flatter others*, as he loves to be flatter'd himſelf; yet let his *pride* but once work the other way, and ſet him upon an *ambitious project*, then all the mean condeſcenſions imaginable are with eaſe digeſted, he can crouch and proſtrate, and as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *fall down and humble himſelf*, that by that deſcent he may rebound to the height he aims at: But ſtill pride is the common cauſe of theſe ſo diſtant effects. In like manner, the Riotus Prodigal deteſts *covetouſneſs*, looks upon it as ſo ſordid and baſe, that he brands even *prudent frugality* as approaching too near it: yet let him but once find the *ſprings* to grow dry which ſhould feed his *luxury*; when he feels his Riot begins to exhauſt and prey upon it ſelf, then even that *deſpiſed covetouſneſs* ſhall be call'd in to its aid, to dig *metal* for the Furnace to melt, and ſo by a ſtrange *Antiperiſtaſis*, *prodigality* ſhall beget *rapine*. Thus unhappily *prolifick* is every Sin, that it carries in its bowels the *ſeed* and *principle* even of thoſe that ſeem the moſt *Heterogeneous*; and then how ſhall a man that has admitted but any one ſuch teeming luſt be ſecur'd, that it ſhall not thus propagate, till his *Soul become* a meer *deſart*, fill'd with all ſorts of *wild* and *noxious creatures*.

except reſtrain'd by the grace of God, which ſuch men have no reaſon to expect.

10. There is but *one hope* imaginable to interpoſe, and that is, that *God's grace* ſhall prevent this exorbitant *growth of Impiety* in him, and I acknowledge that is ſufficient to do it, where it may have its kindly *operation*; but where it has ſo, it will uniformly ſuppreſs *all ſin*, and therefore where *any one* continues in force and vigour, 'tis maniſeſt that operation of Grace is obſtructed, and ſuch a man I ſhould deſire ſoberly to conſider what aſſurance he has, that he who has ſo evacuated God's grace in one inſtance, ſhall not do ſo in another? If *in ſpight* of that grace he can be luſtful, why ſhall he not be as able to reſiſt it *in favour* of Drunkenneſs, Sacriledge, Rebellion, or any other crime to which he ſhall at any time have appetite? Can he imagine that God ſends forth an irreſiſtible ſtrength againſt ſome ſins, whileſt in others he permits men a power of repelling his *Grace*? that were to tranſcribe the *Syrian*'s abſurd fancy, that he is *God of the hills and not of the valleys*: No certainly, he who has his own unhappy experience to atteſt the poſſibility of fruſtrating the Divine ſuccours in one particular, has too ſure grounds to infer the like in others. Nay alas, it does not only infer it by way of *argument* and *deduction*, but it is very apt to produce it by way of *cauſe* and *efficiency*: We gain a readineſs to any thing by cuſtom and aſſuefaction, and he who has habitually oppos'd *Grace* in the defence of a *Luſt*, has deliver'd himſelf from that modeſty which makes the firſt defiance uneaſie, and ſo runs on with eaſe and boldneſs to future reſiſtance. It fares with men in this violation of *God's Grace*, as it does in that of his *Patrimony*, the firſt Sacrilege is lookt on with ſome horror, and men are fain to deviſe *arguments* and colours to delude their reluctating *Conſciences*; but when they have once made the breach, their ſcrupuloſity ſoon retires; one draught of that *impious gain* has ſuch a *ſtupifying effect*, that they can

without check ſwallow on, till the Sin flame ſo fiercely, that nothing but meer want of Matter can extinguiſh it. But admit it were poſſible for a man to be ſecured of his own compliance with ſome part of reſtraining grace whileſt he impugns it in others; yet who ſhall aſcertain him of that grace? It being God's implies 'tis not in our power, he may ſurely do what he will with his own, and though his *promiſe* has made a ſure *entail* of it to all thoſe, who *humbly ſeek* and *diligently uſe* it: Yet it no where engages that it ſhall be the *portion* of any other; much leſs that it ſhall importunately and endleſly renew its aſſaults on thoſe who have often repulſt and put it to flight: In that caſe *God's reſolution* concerning the *old world*, becomes appliable, *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man*; and *Chriſt* who forbids us to *caſt pearls before Swine*, will certainly never proſtitute what is infinitely more precious, his *Grace* to thoſe, who have ſo long trampled it under their feet; and ſo thoſe muſt be concluded to have done, who have perſevered in any one ſin; for Grace is uniformly oppoſite to all, and therefore the cleaving to any is defiance and affront to it. But we need not the help of inferences and deduction, the threats of God are expreſs in this matter: The *Talent* is decreed to be taken from the *unprofitable ſervant*, who has not employed it to the proper uſe, and ſuch infallibly is *every man* who has not actuated the *Grace* given him to the ſubduing of every *reigning ſin*; and the *reprobate mind* mention'd in Scripture as the moſt diſmal of all the Plagues, the νοῦς ἀδόκιμος, which yields not the melting and the purging force of Fire, and therefore does conſign to that of Hell, is founded upon the voluntary rejection of God in particular inſtances, *Rom.* 1. How then can he, that in any one ſingle thing ſo rejects him, aſſure himſelf that ſhall not be the event of it? That he who would not have Chriſt rule entirely in his *heart*, ſhall at once be put out of his *government* and *protection*? have all thoſe ſpiritual aids withdrawn, which would either aſſiſt him to good, and fortifie him againſt ill; and like an out-law'd perſon be expos'd to the outrage of all that will aſſault him.

The Devil is content we ſhould be partially good,

11. And now would God this might be ſadly pondered, that men would not be their own *Syren's*, and entertain themſelves with thoſe deceitful *melodies*, which will end in *howlings and gnaſhings of teeth*; that they would not think their having ſome few vertues, and but ſome few vices will ſerve to ſatiſfie the deſign, or procure them the rewards of their Chriſtianity: For if they ſhould continue in this poſture, and not be tempted to grow worſe, they may certainly conclude, 'tis becauſe Satan finds they need not. And can they be proud of that vertue which the Devil himſelf will allow them? and think themſelves *good* enough when they are as bad as he wiſhes them? But even in this they have no other tenure than his Will. When he pleaſes, for his intereſt, or even for his divertiſement and recreation, he may hurry them to all that is moſt enormous; convert their *Hypocriſie* to *profaneneſs*, their *partial* Piety to *univerſal* Ungodlineſs; they have nothing to interpoſe in their own Defence, not ſo much as a reaſonable argument to oppoſe to him, they have made a voluntary ſale of themſelves for one or more beloved ſin, and now as his *vaſſals* he may impoſe on them what others he pleaſes: And by their doting affection to their *Rachel*, take advantage alſo to obtrude the deſpis'd *Leah* upon them. And how wretched, how deplorable is this ſtate? What a *Piety* is this that we muſt owe to the *Devil*, while we can be no better than he will let us.

ſo he can but enſnare us by any one Luſt.

12. Yet this is without *Hyperbole*, the condition of every man that is not ſincerely, uniformly Chriſtian; every indulg'd ſin gives *Satan* livery and ſeiſin of his heart, and a power to diſpoſe of it as he pleaſes. I know men

are apt to flatter themſelves with other hopes, and think that thoſe obediences they pay to God, ſhall like a pre-engagement diſannul all after contracts made by guilt, and put them into the poſſeſſion of Him who is able to *bind* that *ſtrong man*. But God will not be acceſſary to ſuch a fraud, even towards the Devil; while they keep the price, enjoy that pleaſure or profit wherewith he bought them, God will never interpoſe to defeat him of his purchaſe.

God will not ſhare our obedience with the Devil.

13. And as God will not thus forcibly wreſt them out of his hands, much leſs will he deſcend to a capitulation and compoſition with him. *God is a jealous God*, and what *jealous husband* did ever by compact divide his right with the *Adulterer*? Where he finds a preſerving diſloyalty, he gives a bill of divorce and diſclaims his relation. Yet ſo beſotted are men as to hope God will ratifie that alienation they have made of one part of their heart, and contentedly enjoy the reſt; and as competitors uſed ſometimes to do, ſhare with his Rival. But alas! that immortal quarrel will not be thus taken up, the difference between theſe irreconcileable *Antagoniſts* will not be ſo compremiſed. God diſdains ſuch a treaty, nor will ever come ſo much as to an interview with his Enemy, within the liſts and receſſes of one heart. And while men labour ſuch an accord, they are but combining with *Satan* againſt *God* and their own *Souls*: He knows well, that while he holds any part, God will have none, and ſo the whole falls to him, and then he may very ſafely be modeſt, and demand but moderately, and by that ſeeming deference and yielding, gain more than by all his moſt eager contendings. I ſuppoſe every man will diſown the having this ridiculous deſign of compounding the ſtrife between *Heaven* and *Hell*; but certainly it is the natural interpretation of ſuch partial obediences; when two *Litigants* contend for ſomething which I have in my keeping, if I divide it between them, is it not obvious to conclude, I deſire to compoſe the diſpute and ſatisfie both parties, and is not this the very caſe here? 'Tis true indeed, it carries a very abſurd ſound, but then how more abſurd is it for men to act at ſuch a rate, that when 'tis repreſented to them in the trueſt colours, themſelves are aſhamed to own what they have done? and this calls loudly upon them to put themſelves out of the laſh of their own diſcipline; to recover ſuch an innocence that they may not be forced with *David* to ſentence themſelves, when that their crimes appear in the light diſguiſe of a *Parable*.

We muſt renounce all ſin, to avoid the Devil's ſnares;

14. And this indeed is the only proper uſe of all theſe conſiderations, the danger and folly are as *unuſeful* as *unpleaſant* ſpeculations, unleſs it be in order to the reforming that wherein both are founded. Let them conſider themſelves, as engaged in thoſe wild projects which even themſelves look on with ſcorn: As enſnared in that unhappy contract which has rendred them part of the *Devil*'s poſſeſſion, and contrive how they may obliterate that reproach, and diſentangle their mortgag'd Souls.

15. And for this there is but one way imaginable, and that is by quitting their hands of that which they took as the valuable conſideration in that mad bargain; reſtoring *Satan*'s coyn to him, not only *principal* but *uſe* alſo: Caſting away the main ſin and all the little appendages, which like off-ſets have ſhot out from that root; retaining nothing that has his mark and impreſs upon it, that ſo he may not pretend to any thing of theirs by right of barter or exchange. This, and this only is the way to diſſeize him of his Eſtate, to cancel thoſe fatal Indentures which bound them to him, and till this be done, as long as they keep any part of his *wages of Iniquity*, his title remains in full force, they are ſtill his *ſervants*, his *vaſſals*.

16. Even the *redemption of Chriſt* has no efficacy towards the enfranchizing of ſuch; for though it proclaim an univerſal *Jubilee*, yet it forces liberty upon none; he that will nail his Ear to the door-poſt and defie a manumiſſion, may continue his ſlaviſh life ſtill, and indeed though Chriſt's death was deſigned to reſcue us from the power of Satan, yet the firſt eſſay of that reſcue was to redeem us from our vain converſation: And where that is not done, which is ſo eſſentially fundamental to all the reſt, 'tis not poſſible any other part of that Redemption ſhould be atchiev'd, unleſs we will confound that order of *Nature* as well as *Grace*, and make the *conſequent* precede the *antecedent*.

Otherwiſe no benefit by Chriſt's Redemption.

17. Let no man therefore upon any vain hopes delay the one only expedient to his ſecurity, but pay back the *earneſt penny* he has received from *Satan*, fling away his *ſin*, how pleaſant or profitable ſoever, with the greateſt Abhorrence, as knowing 'tis the *price of blood*, and that not only his *Saviour's*, but his *own* too; and this immediately, leſt the forfeiture be irreverſible. We know the danger of lapſing time in caſe of Mortgage, but here our danger is greater, becauſe the time is ſo uncertain; for though God had nothing elſe to do in the whole tranſaction ('twas wholly our work) yet 'tis he that aſſigns the time of forfeiture: He alone knows how far we may go in ſin, before we paſs the poſſibility of a retreat; how long he will be provok'd before he ſuffer his whole diſpleaſure to ariſe; and how many repellings of his Grace, and quenchings of his Spirit there are, to which his deſertions are apportion'd. *Pharaoh*'s heart was harden'd by God after the *Eighth reſiſtance*, and we have no ſecurity but ours may be *ſooner*, yet if that ſhould be taken as the ſtanding meaſure, how dreadful an abode would it make to many of us? Who is there that has eſpouſed any one *beloved ſin*, that has not much oftner repeated the *acts* of it, every one of which is a reſiſtance and contumacy againſt God? Who is there that has not done it againſt ſo many expreſs warnings, and loud calls of God in his own *Conſcience*? Which renders it yet a fuller *parallel*, and 'tis to be fear'd, too many agree with it even in the laſt and higheſt circumſtance, that of the *Plagues* too, by an obſtinate perſiſting after ſo many *Judgments* ſent to mollifie and reclaim them; and then where the *premiſes* are the ſame, 'tis too likely the *concluſion* may be ſo alſo.

The great danger of obſtinate perſiſting in any one ſin,

18. I ſhall not wiſh any perſon ſo ſtrictly to apply this caſe, as to conclude that he is already in this ſtate, but I could wiſh all men would apply it ſo far, as to infer how *poſſible*, nay, how *probable* it is, that the very next reſiſtance ſhall put them in it. 'Tis not *Pharaoh*'s being a *Heathen* and they *Chriſtians* that will give them any ſecurity; it being no part of the Goſpel-Covenant, that men ſhall be ever the longer allow'd to trample upon Grace. All the difference it make is rather on the other ſide; the contempts are enhans'd to a higher guilt, and conſequently, the fewer acts may now ſerve to fill up the meaſure. And if their experience teſtifie to them, that in their particular, God had us'd a greater long-ſuffering than he has given any grounds to expect, if the guilt of their Conſciences teſtifie that they have committed many more acts; and yet ſome remaining tenderneſſes and regrets witneſs alſo, that they are not yet given up to an utter hardneſs and obduration, O let them not preſume themſelves ſafe, becauſe they are not utterly deſperate; but lay their hearts open to be ſtampt and impreſt by grace, before they grow utterly inflexible; timely conſider what is the deſign of this *longanimity*, and without any more ſtrugglings and reſiſtance ſuffer it to attain its aim, and *lead them to repentance*.

the guilt whereof is greater in Chriſtians than Heathens,

19. For

and diſpoſeth to utter hardneſs and impenitency.

19. For though their Souls be not yet wholly petrified, yet how know they in what an inſtant that unhappy *Metamorphoſis* may be wrought; or if it ſhould not be ſo ſudden, yet 'tis certain every act of ſin makes gradual approaches towards it: So that if God ſhould not inflict it by way of *puniſhment*, yet the meer force of Habit would produce it by way of *natural efficacy*: And to be convinc'd of this, I ſhould require no more, but that men would reflect, and ſee what effects it has already wrought, how far it has advanced toward that fatal point. Let them ſend their thoughts back through every ſtage and period of their ſin, and obſerve whether as that has grown, ſo their tenderneſs and reluctance of Conſcience has not abated and decreaſed: Let him but recollect what regrets and diſquiets they had, when they ventured upon the firſt unlawful commiſſion, and compare it with their preſent, and I doubt not they will diſcern a great inequality; they will find that every act of ſin hath allayed ſomewhat of the ſharpneſs of thoſe pangs, and proportionably to the frequency of the repetition they approach toward inſenſible: And then let him whoſe older Habits has multiplied thoſe *Acts*, ſadly conſider how *few* ſteps he has to the end of his unhappy journey, though no extrinſick concurrent ſhould haſten his pace. But when God's deſertion ſhall, as for ought he knows it may the next minute, ſupervene; That, as full and violent *Wind*, drives him in an inſtant, not to the *Harbour*, but on the *Rock*, where he will be irrecoverably ſplit.

The wilfulneſs of any ſin is the higheſt aggravation thereof.

20. Nor let any man fortifie himſelf againſt theſe terrors, by hoping that his *own ſingle* (perhaps ſmall) ſin ſhall not have this deſtructive force; for if it be *wilful* it carries in it that which is properly the *malignity* of all ſin, to wit, a reſiſtance and oppoſition againſt God; and this is ſo *mortal* a Venome, that the leaſt Doſe of it is *deadly*, as a man may as certainly be poiſon'd by a *dram of Arſenick*, as with the *largeſt draught*.

The ſmalleſt ſin not to be allow'd in.

21. The more natural inference lies the other way, if it be but a ſingle or petty ſin, 'tis ſo much the eaſier to part with; he that is bound with a *ſtrong Cable*, or with a multitude of leſſer Cords, may pretend ſome *neceſſity* of his Captivity, from the ſtrength of his bonds; but he that is tied with *one ſlender ſtring*, ſuch as one reſolute ſtruggle would be ſure to break; He is *priſoner* only to his own *ſloth* or humour, and who will pity his *thraldom*, where 'tis ſo apparently his *choice*? Do not therefore ſay my ſin is inconſiderable, therefore I need not *relinquiſh* it; but my ſin is inconſiderable, therefore I need not *keep* it. So ſlight a pleaſure I may part with and find no miſs: This peddling profit I may reſign, and 'twill be no breach in my Eſtate. And if *Chriſt* require a renunciation of *thoſe ſins* which are as the *Hand and Eye*, ſhall I ſcruple to depoſite *thoſe* which are but as the *Hair or Nails*?

The leſſer the ſin, the greater the guilt in not parting with it.

22. Nay, he may yet argue higher, and from the ſmallneſs of the ſin deduce the enhanſement of the Guilt: Great acquiſitions carry ſome temptation in their face, but deſpicable prizes do rather avert than tempt. 'Twas the ſign of a *common harlot* to be *hired with a kid*, *Gen.* 38. and ſure he muſt be of a ſtrange proſtitute Soul, that can adulterate for ſuch low trivial wages. To diſhonour God, though the *whole world* were to be acquired by it, were *great impiety*; but to do it for *handfuls of Barley* and *pieces of Bread*, *Ezek.* 13. 19. himſelf brands as a yet higher pitch. And ſure it argues a very light eſteem of God, when one poor contemptible luſt ſhall be able to overpoize him in our hearts.

Folly to endanger our Souls for a ſingle Luſt

23. Nor is the *folly* leſs than the *profaneneſs*, when there is but one *Jonah* to be caſt over-board, 'tis the greater madneſs to hazard a *wrack*; and let

ſuch a man pretend what he pleaſes in extenuation of his ſin, make that appear never ſo minute and deſpicable, yet 'tis apparent all the love which other men ſcatter and deſtribute upon ſeveral, he has united and concentred in this one luſt. The moſt *doting affection* when it is ſummed up can amount to no more than *this*, that it makes a man expoſe himſelf to the greateſt *pain*, the greateſt *loſs* for the thing beloved. And this is moſt viſible here: *Hell* is as certainly acquired, and *Heaven* as certainly forfeited, by *one* ſin as *many*; and then though there may be odds in other reſpects, yet what is there in this, between this more *modeſt* and the moſt *licentious* Sinner, but that the *former* puts the ſame value upon one, that the *other* does upon many ſins, and ſells his Soul ſo much the cheaper.

The pleaſure and profit whereof is but ſmall.

24. And now would God ſuch men would review their *bargain*, ſoberly conſider what there is in this *Idoliz'd Sin* of theirs, which ſhould exact ſuch *coſtly ſacrifices*. Let him whoſe long intimacy and experience has given him acceſs to its moſt ſecret receſſes, that has rifled its bowels, and knows the utmoſt whether of pleaſure or profit that lies there conceal'd: Let him I ſay, that is thus qualified for it, make an exact inventory of its wealth, and then let him compare it with that he is to pay for it; weigh its flat and *momentany Pleaſures*, with thoſe moſt tranſcending and *perpetual Joys* which are at *God's right hand*; its baſe and periſhing commodities, with thoſe [illegible] treaſures in Heaven; and then judge of his purchaſe in reſpect of [illegible] of his price: And if that be not convincement enough, let him weigh the other alſo: Thoſe ſad *pains* which are too *intolerable*, to be ſuffer'd and ſo *eternal*, that they can never ceaſe to be ſuffered, and think whether that be not too dear a rate for that pleaſure, whoſe guſt is ſo little, and whoſe duration is leſs: Or what *profit* he will have in the revenue of his ſin, That *Gold and Silver*, which will finally *eat his fleſh as it were fire*, *Ja.* 5. 3. and prove the unhappy *fuel of his Flames*.

All ſin and vice to be entirely renounc'd.

25. From all theſe *premiſſes*, certainly Reaſon and Religion do equally infer the ſame *concluſion*, to wit, That men ſhould not tolerate themſelves one minute in any known ſin of how ſmall a ſize ſoever it be; nor ſo impertinently betray their Souls to ruine for that which they call light and trivial; and is ſo indeed in reſpect of the *acquiſt*, but overwhelmingly ponderous in regard of the effects and pernicious conſequents. And O that mens practices might evince them to have made this juſt deduction, that thoſe who have in many things preſerv'd an *innocence*, would not be ſo ill husbands as to forfeit all the *advantage* of that Care for want of extending it a little farther, nor ſuffer the whiter parts of their Soul to be diſcolour'd or tinctured by the reflection of one crimſon ſin; but rather let their tears waſh that into a whiteneſs, that they may be uniform and of a piece. For though *Jacob* clad his darling *Joſeph* in a party-colour'd garment; yet God owns none either for favourite-*Son*, or ſo much as *Servant*, that he finds ſo arrayed. The *followers of the Lamb* are all clad in *white*, and in that attire we muſt be ſure to put our ſelves, if we mean to go in with him to the *marriage*. And ſince the Goſpel is the invitation to that Feaſt, let none imagine he has complied with it till he have thus fitted himſelf: till then he affronts and *baffles* his Chriſtianity, ſends it away empty without its errand; nay, which is worſe, *proſtitutes* and profanes it, makes it ſerve only for a *Gourd*, that he may ſit under the ſhadow of it, and commit his ſins the more undiſturb'd; but let him remember that he is all this while breeding that *worm*, which will ſmite this *Gourd*, and leave him unſhelter'd to that ſcorching *wrath* of God, which will make the improvement of *Jonah*'s paſſionate wiſh, that God would take away his life, his moſt rational deſire; render not Death only, but Annihilation alſo as *eligible*, as it will be *impoſſible*.

CHAP. VII.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Miſtakes concerning Repentance.

Great miſtakes about Repentance.

1. ANother dangerous Underminer of Chriſtian Practice is the many affected miſtakes in the buſineſs of *Repentance*. Men look upon that as the *grand recipe* of the Goſpel, and infallible *Catholicon* againſt all their ſpiritual *maladies*; and ſo far they judge right, for ſo indeed it is. But when they proceed to compound this ſoveraign *Medicine* for their own uſe, they do it moſt deceitfully; leave out the principal and moſt operative *ingredients*: And by being ſuch ill *Apothecaries*, defame the Goſpel as the *Diſpenſatory*, and *Chriſt* as the *Phyſician*, and likewiſe ruine themſelves as the *Patients*. But of thoſe who make this imperfect and defective *compoſition*, all do it not alike; ſome leave out one part, ſome another, and ſome ſo many, that they retain nothing of its ſubſtance and reality: Eat out all the *heart* and vertue of it, and leave only an empty *ſhell*, the gilding, as it were, of the *Pill*, the form and meer outſide of *Repentance*.

Some place Repentance only in outward geſtures and appearances

2. In this latter rank, I place thoſe who ſuffer *repentance* to paſs no farther than their Frontiers, and Out-works, aſſign it its quarters in the *ſuperficies* of the man, the *Face*, or *Tongue*, or *Geſture*; but if it attempt to penetrate any deeper, if it ſend but one ſerious thought to alarm the heart, then like the *Edomites* againſt *Iſrael*, *Numb.* 20. all the forces are muſtered to impede its paſſage; ſuch *formal* Penitents as theſe all ages have produc'd. Chriſt tells us of thoſe who *disfigur'd their faces*, *Matth.* 6. 16. put on, as it were, a vizard only to act this part: and *Eſay* 58. 5. long before deſcribes them, by the *bowing down the head like a Bull-ruſh*, and certainly the race of them is not worn out in our days; a demure or rather a lugubrious *look*, a ſad or whining *tone*, makes up, 'tis to be fear'd, the *ſumm* of many men's Humiliations. Nay, as the world has of late gone, that alone were but a modeſt pretence: ſuch theatrical *forms* ſtickle hard for the *prize*, not of that one part, but of all religion: a *diſtorted countenance* is made the mark of an *upright heart*, and none is thought to ſpeak the Language of *Canaan*, that dreſſes it not in an uncouth ſound: And then what wonder is it, that they are impatient others ſhould *worſhip God*, as *David* invites, *in the beauty*, while themſelves chuſe to do it, in the deformity *of holineſs*.

others in a bare acknowledgment and confeſſion of ſin.

3. But others make ſomewhat a fairer advance towards *repentance*, by taking in ſome of thoſe things which are indeed its *neceſſary concomitants*; of this kind, is in the firſt place *confeſſion of Sin*: And this after ſome ſort is ſtuck at by few; no man who hath not herded himſelf with the worſt ſort of *Fanaticks*, imagines himſelf ſinleſs, or pretends to be thought ſo by others, but will very readily acknowledge to all the world that he is a *ſinner*: And as to *men*, ſo eſpecially and more ſolemnly to *God*. Every man that but offers at praying at all, thinks Confeſſion a neceſſary branch of his Devotion: All publick *forms* have ever carried that in the *front*, as ſuppoſing it the moſt principal, univerſal, and daily requiſite to the lapſing ſtate of humane corruption: And perhaps 'tis the general innate perſwaſion of this, that hath ſecur'd that part of our *Liturgie*, from thoſe impertinent cavils, which have particularly aim'd at moſt other members of it. And I ſuppoſe this is as frequent in the *Cloſet* as in the *Church*: The only fear is, that there it is as looſe and general too: That thoſe private and particular guilts which are neither fit nor poſſible to be diſtinctly

inſerted in *publick*, do many times loſe their place even in *private* Confeſſions alſo. The ſhortneſs and the eaſe of general forms being very likely to recommend them to thoſe whoſe numerous ſins threaten too great a length, and whoſe confus'd ſnarl'd conſciences render it difficult, thus to pull out thread by thread: But where *Sins* are thus moulded up in a *lump*, they will like great *maſſes* of *Pills* or Confections keep the more undecayed, retain more of their *ſtrength* and *vigour*. So that *ſuch* Confeſſions are very indulgent to *Satan*'s *intereſt*, who fears not the impreſſions that can be made upon him, while his *body* remains entire: The great execution then beginning when 'tis broken and ſcatter'd, and each ſin is ſingled out for a particular purſuit: And where that is not attempted, the war can never be ſucceſsful, nor thought in earneſt.

4. But ſuppoſe this be done; and by exact enumeration each ſin is parted from its fellows, as when a *conqueror* purſues the *flying troops* of routed Enemies: Yet if this be all, if *quarter* be allowed, and any mercy given, no *real prize* is gain'd by this atchievement. He who recounts his ſins with milder purpoſe towards them than utter exciſion, he makes no approach towards the eſſential part of Repentance. He may bring out large *Catalogues* of his ſins, and call them *confeſſions*; but he may better expreſs his own ſence, if he term them rather *inventories* of his goods; for ſuch 'tis apparent he reckons them, whilſt he reſolves to keep them. Indeed there is not a more abſurd piece of *Pageantry*; than theſe *formal* Confeſſions, and ſuch as ſhews how little *God* is conſider'd in his great attribute, *the ſearcher of hearts*. 'Tis certain, no man would hope to atone an offended ſuperior, by a ſubmiſs acknowledgment of his fault, did he know that his purpoſe of reiterating it were diſcerned: And what a tacit *blaſphemy* is it then, to treat *God* at ſuch a rate, as preſumes him as *deceivable* as a poor *Mortal*; and ſure this were a ſtrange Ingredient in *repentance*. We look on it as a high pitch of impiety boaſting to avow our ſins, and it deſerves to be conſider'd whether this kind of confeſſing them have not ſome affinity with it. Should I tell a man I have injur'd and provok'd you thus and thus, and ſo I reſolve to do again at the next opportunity: I refer it to common conſtruction, whether this were not to juſtify, not retract the unkindneſs. Now what I ſuppoſe thus ſaid to man is in the ſecret purpoſe of our heart, no leſs articulately ſpoken to God, who needs not our words to diſcern our meaning. Therefore whoever intends to *repeat* his ſins, nay, does not ſeriouſly intend to forſake them, does in truth maintain and defend his vicious practice, how loudly ſoever his Tongue accuſes it. And ſuch *clamors* are but like the feign'd Quarrels of combined *cheats*, in order to delude ſome third perſon. But alas, The ſcene is here unluckily laid, for God will not be mock'd, nor will the mercy promis'd to him that confeſſeth and *forſaketh*, ever reach him that confeſſeth and *retaineth*. Confeſſion is no farther acceptable than as it either flows from, or tends to beget on abhorrence of Sin, and abſtracted from thoſe qualifications it becomes loathſome and diſtaſteful to God. Alas, Can we think our *Hiſtorical* vein ſo pleaſant, that he ſhall be delighted with tr the *narrative* of thoſe crimes, whoſe perpetration he deteſted? Can it be *Incenſe* in his noſtrils to have our *Dunghils* diſplayed? Or can his pure eyes be gratified with ſuch polluted proſpects? True indeed, he gladlv deſcends to all this as a *Phyſician*: nauſeats not our *fouleſt ulcers*, when we bring them for *cure*: But when like *beggars* we make them openly our form of addreſs, and dread nothing more than their *healing*; certainly their View will only excite his *indignation*, not his pity. And this, 'tis to be fear'd,

Confeſſion of ſin without forſaking it, is unaccepta-nce to God.

abodes ſadly to many of us ; 'tis our vulgar Objection to the *Romaniſts*, that they make their confeſſions contributive rather to their *confidence* than to their *reformation* : What their ſhare is in that guilt, I ſhall not here examine, but I may too truly pronounce they have not encloſ'd it ; that black circle of Sin and *confeſs*, Confeſs and *ſin*, encompaſſes as well *Proteſtants* as *Papiſts* ; if poſſible not quite ſo many, the cauſe, 'tis doubtful, is what we need not boaſt) not that more of us confeſs *aright*, but that fewer confeſs *at all*. But of thoſe that do, if we may but croſs-examine, and interrogate their *actions* againſt their *words*, theſe will ſoon confeſs (and that not *auricularly*, but in a loud and audible voice) the *invalidity* of their ſolemneſt Confeſſions. When we ſee a man that *yeſterday* kept a Humiliation, *to day* trampling on the necks, invading the poſſeſſions of his Brethren, we need no other proof how vainly and unprofitably, if not how hypocritically and provokingly he confeſſed his Pride, or Covetouſneſs : And the like we may infer when we ſee any man perſevere in any groſs wilful ſin. And of ſuch, God knows, there are ſuch multitudes, as will give us inſtances more than enough, how wide a difference there is between a *meer Confitent* and a *true Penitent*.

Some place Repentance only in external grief and ſorrow for ſin.

5. But in the next place, a *paſſionate regret* at Sin, a *grief* and *ſadneſs* at its memory, more ſpeciouſly pretends to enter us in God's roll of *Mourners* : Sorrow has (in vulgar acceptation) ſo engroſt the whole notion of Repentance, that men are apt to ſecure themſelves, that the Wind of a penetential *Sigh* is ſo mighty, as will blow away the guilt of the moſt mountainous *Sin* : That if they have but wept a little upon their crimes, they have quite *extinguiſhed* the wrath they kindled : But alas, theſe are vain dreams, *God* who *delights not to grieve the children of men*, does not project for our ſorrow, but our innocence ; and would never have invited us to the one, but as an expedient to the other. 'Tis natural, even to meer *Animals* to ſhun that by which they have ſmarted, and therefore ſorrow for ſin is a very proper means to avert our appetite from it : But if we have learnt the unhappy skill of ſeparating the *effect* from the *cauſe* ; if our Grief abate not our Love ; if we can caſt kind looks at our ſins, even through thoſe Tears wherewith our Eyes are glaſs'd, this will ſure be as far from accompliſhing our deſign, as God's : Leave us equally unpardon'd, as unreform'd.

meer ſorrow without amendment doth but aggravate our guilt,

6. Nay alas, ſuch Sorrows as theſe will rather ſerve to enhanſe than expiate our guilts ; they are loud witneſſes againſt us, that we know the malignity of thoſe ſins we commit ; that we have poz'd them, and find them as a *talent of Lead* upon our Souls, and yet prefer them before Chriſt's *light burthen*. That we have out-vied that perverſe Election, wherewith *Elihu* charges *Job*, and choſen *affliction* rather than *innocence*, *Job.* 36. 21. and tho we have felt the *gnawing of the Worm*, yet ſtill reſolve to cheriſh it, till at gains its woſul Concomitant of unquenchable *fire* ; and ſure this reſolvedneſs, this high fortitude in Sin, can with no reaſon be imagin'd a preparative to its remiſſion, 'twill rather ſerve to liſt us among Satan's *Martyrs*, than God's *Penitents*.

and is of no avail towards our pardon.

7. And indeed if we examine the original of this kind of Sorrow, what is there that can with any face pretend to an acceptation ? Alas ! 'Tis apparent there is no diſlike to the ſin ; for the natural effect of that, would be the abandoning it. If I have fall'n into the mire, common reaſon directs me, not to ſit down and cry that I am ſo defiled, but to cleanſe and waſh my ſelf, and beware of ſuch another miſadventure. Now God's enmity is purely with the ſin : And if we think to contract a league with him ; we muſt eſpouſe his quarrel, hate what he hates : But in this caſe 'tis quite

otherwiſe, we diſlike only the *conſequence*, not the *crime*; are diſſatisfied to ſee that what is ſo pleaſant, will not be ſafe: Deteſt thoſe temporal or eternal miſeries, which God has annext to it: Which is upon the matter to grieve not becauſe we are *guilty*, but God is *juſt*: And to avert only that part of the *evil*, of which he owns to be the author, that of puniſhment; whilſt that of *Sin*, as our own creature, we dandle and careſs. And can we think it ſufficient to atone an incenſed Majeſty, that we love our own eaſe, while yet we love our ſin ſo much better? Is it a *vertue* to have ſome ineffective regrets to damnation, and ſuch a vertue too, as ſhall ſerve to balance all our vices? This were indeed a compendious courſe to block up Hell gates, and leave none a poſſibility of ever getting thither, but thoſe who ſcaled the Wall, and deſperately reſolved to poſſeſs themſelves of that place of *Torment*. But alas, They are other *fruits* of Repentance that muſt *deliver us from the wrath to come*: For though I deny not, that the *apprehenſion* of Danger is extreamly both reaſonable and uſeful, yet 'tis only by way of *preparative*: 'Tis like the *Trumpet* that gives the *Alarm*, and ſets us to the *battel*, but it muſt not pretend to be like thoſe of *Gideon* that atchiev'd the whole victory. To ſee our danger, may occaſion, but does not cauſe, or neceſſarily infer an *eſcape*. I may madly leap into that pit which I ſee gaping to ſwallow me, and then my *foreſight* ſerves only to render me my own murderer. In ſhort, if that formidable aſpect of our Sins make us run from them, it has done us the happieſt office; *pluckt us*, as S. *Jude* ſays, *out of the fire*: But if our love be ſo doting, as to counter-charm our fear, if we be ſo bewitcht with the *deceitfulneſs of ſin*, that we will have its embraces, though we know them *deadly*; if we weep that we have ſinn'd, and yet go on to ſin; our wilful *Guilt* will defile our *Tears*, but our tears will never cleanſe our guilt. We only aſſiſt in the judicature againſt our ſelves; and to God's condemnation add our own: And what we call our Penitence becomes a ſad atteſtation of our Incorrigibleneſs.

Partial obedience is likewiſe defective and ſhort of true Repentance.

8. And as this *meer Sorrow* will never avail, ſo neither will a *partial* and *imperfect reformation*, and that whether it be defective in reſpect of the *kind*, or of the *duration*: To the former we have ſpoke elſewhere, and ſhall not need to repeat: But of the *latter* there will need no leſs caution; men being apt to obtrude fallacies on themſelves in this as much as in the other. Every tranſient *glean* of Piety is concluded to be that *flame* in which the Holy Ghoſt deſcended, and though it want the main circumſtance of reſting on them, yet ſerves to perſonate the Comforter. He that whilſt the ſoreneſs of his late pangs of *Conſcience* remains, finds himſelf a little indiſpos'd for a new career in ſin, preſently concludes *repentance* hath had its perfect work in him, made that *change* and tranſmutation, which certainly denominates him a *new creature*, and pronounces his *vicious appetite extinct* and *mortified*: When alas, they are but ſtrew'd over with a little *penitential Aſhes*, and will as ſoon as they meet with *combuſtible matter*, any apt temptation *flame out* as fierce as ever: And God knows, the event does too often actually atteſt this, after all the ablutions and purification of their Repentance, their next work is to diveſt themſelves of their white robe, and thoſe whom yeſterday you ſaw in the *laver*, to day you ſhall find wallowing in the *mire*: And as with far the more *guilt*, ſo ſometimes with much the greater *confidence*, for having been ſo waſht: Yet ſo ſtrongly are ſome mens fancies poſſeſt with their imaginary purity, that they are the laſt that takes notice how the ſcene is chang'd: They comfort themſelves, that ſin and they have had ſome little *skirmiſhes*, though but preparatory to a cloſer *league*; That they had fixt good purpoſes, though there remain

nothing viſible but their violation; and ſo will call themſelves Chriſt's *Sheep*, though their notorious impurities witneſs them to belong only to that *herd* into which the *Legion* entred.

These miſtakes are occaſioned by a wrong method of quieting peoples conſciences,

9. This is a deceit which one would think ſhould immediately detect it ſelf, but 'tis ſtrange to ſee, how our *wiſhes* can preſcribe to our *faith*; and what a more than omnipotent power our ſelf-love has in reconciling contradictions: Yet I can ſcarce think this innate ſtrength of corruption had been ſufficient for the purpoſe, had it not had the auxiliary aid of ſome commodious doctrines. My preſent deſign is ſo far from controverſial, that I am loath to point out any to which I muſt expreſs unkindneſs: Yet upon this occaſion, I ſhall refer it to conſideration, whether that method which has been us'd to quiet ſome Conſciences, be not very apt to ſtupefie more. When I ſee one who from his preſent reigning ſins, regularly infers the illneſs of his ſtate; that is yet by his Caſuiſt diverted from that proſpect, and bid look back to ſee, whether no part of his life afforded any Evidence of true Grace; and if he can but remember any ſuch time, is warranted to make that his Epocha, from whence to date his *infallible aſſurance*, is told; That that *immortal ſeed*, though it may be covered, yet cannot be choak'd; but will moſt certainly ſpring up unto *Eternal life*: When I ſay, I ſee this eaſie remedy preſcrib'd to his fears, 'twill be obvious for me to compound my ſelf an *Antidote* from the ſame *Ingredients*: To fix my Eye upon ſome mark of Regeneration which at ſome time or other, I either have, or fancied to have had upon me, and with the ſtedfaſt beholding of that, as of the *brazen Serpent*, be fortified againſt all the *venome of my fiery luſts*: Caſt in this one ſtick, and with it ſweeten all the Waters of *Narah*, ſecure me againſt all the bitter effects of my preſent guilts. How fatal an influence ſuch diſcourſings as theſe are apt to have on practice, is too obvious both in the cauſe and effect: I need not examine the authority of that grand principle of which they are founded; ſince if that were admitted, yet it will not juſtifie the before-mentioned ſuperſtructure: For ſuppoſe it received as an infallible truth, that grace, if true, can never be loſt: Yet 'tis by the confeſſion of all, ſo eaſie to be deceived in judging what is ſo, and our partialities to our ſelves are ſo likely to betray us to that deceit; That theſe *Corollaries* men deduce thence for their perſonal aſſurance, can never partake of the ſuppos'd infallibility of thoſe premiſſes they derive from, and conſequently are much too ſlight a *baſis* for men to truſt with ſo great a *weight*, as is that of their *preſent comfort* and *future ſtate*.

and by (deferring or) putting off the work of Repentance till ſickneſs or death.

10. Several other pernicious errors there are in the matter of *Repentance* which men fall into, ſhall I ſay, or rather aſpire to; make it their ambition to be under their covert and patronage, and with extream Violence to their *reaſon* as well as *religion*, climb up to thoſe Caſtles in the Air, and there fortifie themſelves impregnably againſt all the ſacred Artillery of divine threats. Their *falſe confidences* ſerve them as *feather beds*, not only to ſleep ſecurely in, but to *dead all bullets* that are ſhot againſt them. But of all thoſe deceitful *refuges*, there is none more treacherous, and yet more confidently and univerſally reſorted to, than that of a *Repentance in reverſion*, to commenee no body knows when, ſome months or years hence, when this buſineſs is diſpatcht, that luſt ſatiated, or indeed to bear the ſame date (if not a later) with their laſt Will and Teſtament. This is that unhappy retreat to which *thouſands fly* as the routed *Syrians* to *Aphek*; 1 *Kings* 20. 30. till they are entombed in that *wall*, whoſe ſhelter they ſollicited: How deſperate the hazard of ſuch procraſtination is, hath been ſo covin-

cingly demonſtrated by better Pens; That *trumpet* hath been blowed ſo loud by all our ſpiritual *watchmen*, that there remains nothing ſeaſonable, but to wonder whence men have got that *Lethe*, which ſecures them their ſleep in ſpight of that *Alarm*: And certainly, 'tis matter of the greateſt aſtoniſhment to obſerve the ſtupid, yet common boldneſs of men, who ſo fearleſly expoſe themſelves to this moſt formidable of perils; who yet in things of far leſs danger and lighter conſequence are ſo nicely timorous, that no ſecurity is thought enough, every the remoteſt danger to their outward concerns, excites their preſent vigilance to avert it: But here that order is moſt abſurdly inverted, and the *preſent imminent danger* is aſſigned and put off to their *future care*. Let the *Phyſician* tell him he obſerves ſome Symptoms of a latent *Malady*, ſome aptitudes or firſt Cauſes of a *Diſeaſe*; what haſte is there made to meet that Enemy *in the frontiers*, before it advance too far? All arts of prevention are us'd, and ſuch uneaſie *remedies* ſubmitted to, as perhaps out-bid the *pain* of the Diſeaſe. In like manner let a *Lawyer* tell him he has ſpied ſome defect in an *Entail*, which may perhaps in the next age give ſome interruption to their deſign of having their houſes endure for ever, *Pſal.* 47. How ſollicitous are they to repair that *error*, and leave nothing to the mercy of a *Law-quirk*? And in both caſes thank the vigilant care of their informer that gave them notice of their danger: But let the *Divine* tell them he ſees their Souls languiſhing under the moſt mortal diſeaſes; that they have actually forfeited their *inheritance* in the land of the living, they can hear it unconcernedly; ſay, or at leaſt think, thoſe cares are to be remitted to *Felix* his more convenient ſeaſon, that when their *Bodies* are as infirm as their *Souls*, then care may be taken for both together. That 'tis enough for their *ſpiritual* Life to commence, when the *natural* is expiring, and then to provide for *everlaſting* Habitations, when they are putting off their *Earthly* Tabernacle: As for the thanks they give their *Monitor*, 'tis generally the ſame that St. *Paul* received from the *Galatians*, to count him their *enemy for telling them the truth*, *Gal.* 4. 16. But alas, he has no reaſon to reſent the injury, ſince 'tis but the ſame they offer to their neareſt and moſt intimate friend, that *Angel guardian* which God and Nature has placed within their own breaſts, I mean their *Conſcience*: Let that at any time whiſper the ſame admonition, and immediately they cry out as *Ahab* to *Eliah*, *Haſt thou found me, O my Enemy?* All arts are us'd to convey themſelves out of its reach; Buſineſs, or Company, or Drink, or any thing is ſollicited to come in to their reſcue, that in that throng they may deceive its purſuit, or at leaſt, in that louder noiſe drown its voice; and is not this to look on it as their Enemy, while they ſhun it as a Malefactor does the *Officer*? Yet I appeal to the breaſts of thoſe, who lean upon the broken Reed of a late *Repentance*, whether this be not the caſe with them: Let them tell me whether they dare truſt themſelves alone with their *Conſcience*, give it opportunity of ſpeaking freely to them, of laying before them the mad adventure they make of their precious *Souls*; which they do not only expoſe to as many hazards of a *ſwift damnation*, as there are accidents which may ſurprize their *bodies* with a *ſudden death*; but do beſides by their reſiſtance repel and quench that *Spirit*, without which they can never hope to effect that ſo neceſſary, ſo difficult a *work*; nay, I may, I fear, aſk ſome of them, whether they have not ſo often ſhunned theſe parleys, that their *Conſciences* like an *abus'd Friend*, has at laſt given them over, ceas'd to purſue them with more of thoſe unwelcome importunities; and by its ſilence left them ſecur'd from all noiſe which may diſturb that treacherous ſleep into which they have lulled themſelves. To thoſe who are thus given up to the *ſpirit of ſlumber*, I cannot hope to ſpeak loud enough to rouze them; but to thoſe that are but of the former rank, that have not yet ſo proſper'd in their unkind deſign againſt themſelves, as quite to have alienated their boſom friend, that are yet within the teach of thoſe *amica verbera*, the ſtripes and reproofs of their own Conſcience; to ſuch I would addreſs with this moſt affectionate *petition*, that they would not ſeek to remove themſelves from that *wholſom diſcipline*; that they would not fly that *Chirurgeon* whoſe *Lancet* threatens none but the *impoſthumated parts*; but rather chuſe to be ſhewed the formidableneſs of their danger, than by a blind embracing it, to periſh in it. And if they have but any general confus'd inclinations to this ſo reaſonable requeſt, I ſhall then put on more ſolemnity, aſſume to come as an *Envoy* from thoſe dreaded Conſciences of theirs, to *mediate* an interview, to propoſe the fixing ſome time of parley, and beſpeak their *patience* to hear it out: And let them but grant this, let them but dare to do ſo much in order to their own ſafety, and I can ſcarce think it poſſible they ſhould after retain that daring, which only tends to their ruine. In a word, let men ſeriouſly and attentively liſten to that *voice* within them, and they will certainly need no other *medium*, to convince them either of the error or danger of thus procraſtinating their *Repentance*, which themſelves acknowledge muſt not upon their utmoſt peril be finally omitted, and yet nothing but an immediate diſpatch can ſecure it ſhall not.

True Repentance muſt be univerſal, laſting, preſent and undelay'd.

11. 'Twill be needleſs to deſcend to a particular view of more of theſe deceits, they will eaſily be detected by this one *general Rule*, that whatſoever falls ſhort of a preſent, univerſal, permanent Change, falls as much ſhort of *Repentance*. All the pretences that are made upon any other ſcore are but as the garments of the *elder brother*, put upon the back of the *younger*, which though they might delude a blind *Iſaac*, will never be able to deceive an all-ſeeing *God*. All that remains is to offer to the Reader's conſideration, how nearly he is concerned to guard himſelf againſt all deluſions in this ſo important an affair. It was an ancient *Stratagem* of War to poiſon the Waters in an Enemies Camp, that ſo they may drink their own deaths: But *Satan* has here far out-vied that *Policy*. Were but our Nouriſhment infected, we had ſtill a recourſe left us to Medicine; but here he has envenom'd our very Phyſick, and what *cure* remains for thoſe whoſe very *remedies* are their *diſeaſe*? When that Bath which was deſigned to cleanſe us, is it ſelf polluted, we may well cry out as *Dionyſius* of the corrupted River of *Alexandria*, ποῖον γένοιτο ἂν πάντα καθαίροντος ὕδατος ὕδωρ ἄλλο καθάρσιον what Flood ſhall cleanſe theſe Waters? Where can we be ſecure, when our *Repentance* (which the Apoſtle, 2 *Tim.* 2. 26. ſuppoſes the Means of diſentangling us) is it ſelf become our Snare? This, as it loudly proclaims our danger, ſo ſurely in all reaſon it ſhould awake our care, teach us not to ſuffer our ſelves to be abuſed with deluſive appearances and ſhadows of *Repentance*, leſt we finally find that *Ixion-like* we have embraced a Cloud. What an amazing defeat will it be to him, who preſumes his Tears have blotted out the *hand-writing* againſt him, to find the full bill brought in at the great Aſſize, and thoſe he call'd his *penitential ſorrows* here, to prove but the Prologue to that *Tragedy* which ends in *weeping and gnaſhing of teeth*! And therefore let every one timely provide againſt that fatal ſurprize, uſe this excellent receipt, not as *Coſmetick* only to beautifie the face, give him ſome fair appearance to himſelf, but as *Medicine* to reſtore health; reduce him to ſuch an *Athletick* vigorous Habit, as may evidence it ſelf in all *vital* Actions, which will prove the beſt evidences in

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our laſt tryal, where the inquiſition will not be ſo much upon our mouths or eyes, as upon our hands: Nor how many *confeſſions* we have made, or how many tears ſhed, but what acts of vertue we have ſubſtituted in the room of our Vices: Whether we have broken off our ſins by *righteouſneſs*, and our Iniquities by *ſhewing mercy to the poor*; and without this 'tis infallibly certain, our Chriſtianity will be as ineffectual to our *Bliſs*, as it is to our *Piety*? If we will not permit it here to bring us to the obedience of Servants, it ſhall never inſtate us hereafter in the inheritance of Sons.

CHAP. VIII.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Miſtakes concerning Almighty God, and the methods of his Providence.

1. TO theſe Miſtakes of our ſelves and intereſts, we have added others alſo concerning God, which are no leſs deſtructive to Chriſtian Practice; for as the *right knowledge of God is by our Saviour, Joh.* 17. 3. put as the Epitome and ſumm of all that leans to *bliſs*, for our miſpriſions and miſapprehenſions of him, are no leſs remarkable for the contrary effects; nor can we ſuppoſe it otherwiſe, when we remember that this is the grand work and *baſis* of all Religion, and therefore if this *foundation* be deceitfully laid, the *ſuperſtructure* muſt neceſſarily ſink and periſh: And in this ſence 'tis poſſible for us at once to build on the *Rock* and the *Sand* too; we may fix our Faith intentionally on God, and yet by abſurd notions and unwarranted conceits of him, defeat in the particulars what we eſtabliſh'd in the groſs; repreſent him ſo utterly diſtant from what he is, that under that diſguiſe he will not much appear, either an Encourager or Rewarder of our *Piety*, and then we may gueſs how 'tis likely to flouriſh; ſince the Apoſtle gives it as a *Fundamental Axiom*, Heb. 11. 6. That *he who comes to God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them which diligently ſeek him.*

Miſtakes concerning God are dangerous.

2. Of theſe miſtakes concerning God, there are divers; many more than the deſign'd brevity of this diſcourſe will admit me to examine. I ſhall only mention *three*; thoſe are, Firſt, concerning his *Deceres*, Secondly, his *Attributes*, Thirdly, his *Providence*.

Three inſtances of theſe miſtakes.

3. By his *Decrees*, I mean not thoſe ſtanding *rules*, which he has in his word ſet forth as the *meaſures* by which he will diſtribute rewards and puniſhments; but thoſe ſecret *purpoſes of his Will*, which he neither commands us to ſearch after, nor will permit us to know. That there are many Miſtakes concerning theſe, the numberleſs diſputes that have been rais'd about them will ſufficiently atteſt, it being impoſſible for two contradictory opinions to be both true, though in things of this abſtruſe nature 'tis very poſſible both may be falſe. 'Tis not my purpoſe to wade into thoſe bottomleſs controverſies, which like a Gulph have ſwallowed up ſo much time and induſtry of learned men: I ſhall only in *general* commend it to the Reader's conſideration, whether it be probable, or indeed poſſible for thoſe opinions to be true, which infer *falſhood* in God? And then let the ſecond enquiry be, whether that be not too evidently the reſult of thoſe diſcourſes which ſet an oppoſition between his *revealed* and his *ſecret* Will, his Commands and his Decrees, making the one blind for the better execution of the other? as if all the Tranſportation and Zeal he expreſſes for us, all the paſſionate enamouring invitations he makes to us, were only

The firſt inſtance of miſtake is concerning God's Decrees, which they oft oppoſe to his reveal'd Will;

to ſport himſelf with our credulity: Like the devertiſement of thoſe men who court them for Wives, whom they would abhor to marry: Nay, as if all the proteſtations and moſt ſolemn oaths of God, were deſigned but to advance the deluſion, and raiſe expectations, meerly to defeat them. This is ſuch a ſevere ſort of *Irony*, as we would all think not only unkind but unjuſt in a man; and it is not poſſible that God, who appeals to us concerning the equality of his ways, ſhould fall ſhort of the ſtricteſt meaſures among us, or exemplifie to us an unſincerity he forbids us to follow.

whereby they have an evil influence on men's lives and practices.

4. How very inauſpicious influence ſuch *doctrines* are apt to have no *practice* is too viſible; for ſince it is as well the inſtict as duty of our nature to aſpire to an aſſimulation with God, even that moſt laudable and generous ambition ſhall by this means become our ſnare; for when God ſhall be thus miſrepreſented to us, drawn out by the black Lines not only of *ſeverity*, but *deceit*, rendred a falſifier of his *Word*, nay *Oath*; it will give not only temptation but warrant to the like practices: We ſhall eaſily ſwallow up all the particular commands of God, in that fundamental one of being like him; as we are taught himſelf has done both his commands and promiſes in his Decrees. This is ſo natural a piece of *Logick*, that 'tis very unſafe men ſhould be truſted with thoſe *premiſes* whence 'tis deriv'd And though we are not over-apt to tranſcribe that Copy God does really ſet us, yet this ſpurious one will not miſs to be taken out: That pravity of our nature which hinders in the one, exciting and ſpurring us on in the other. This is a way to reconcile our Vices with our reputation, and ſin *cum previlegio*; and there is little doubt of mens aptneſs to uſe that advantage; we ſee it in lower inſtances. The *Vices* of a Prince draw ſholes of followers, when his *vertue* leaves him the more eminent, becauſe ſingle, and renders him rather revered than imitated: And certainly 'twas none of the Devil's ſlighteſt *ſtratagems* on the *Gentile* world, to give them *ſuch* Gods as might exemplifie to them all thoſe *odious crimes* wherein he deſired to immerſe them. Whether this may not be a *branch* of the ſame Illuſion, I wiſh the Propugners of this doctrine would ſeriouſly conſider.

and are a great hindrance to our progreſs in holineſs.

5. And as ſeveral *ills* are hereby countenanc'd and authoriz'd, ſo is all *vertue* in general diſcouraged and diſheartened; this benums us in our Chriſtian courſe, ſubſtracts that ſpirit and vigour, which ſhould carry us through the weary ſtages of duty: Indeed it cuts the very *ſinews* of Induſtry, baffles and makes ridiculous all *purpoſes* of Labour; for what ſhould invite a man to ſtrive for that, from which he knows he is rather irreverſibly precluded, or elſe ſo infallibly aſcertain'd of, that his negligence cannot defeat him? Theſe are ſuch *extreams* as afford no *middle*, wherein the vertue of induſtry may exiſt, hope being equally out-dated by the deſperateneſs or unneceſſarineſs of an undertaking: And how neceſſary hope is to excite endeavour we may learn of S. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 15.5. where he preſſes his *Corinthians* to the conſtancy of Chriſtian Practice upon this ground, that their *labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord*. But according to ſome men's doctrine, 'tis ſcarce poſſible for a man to know whether his labour be in vain or no? ſince the effects of it depends not upon the revealed *promiſe*, but ſecret *purpoſe* of God, and who knows whether there may not lie ſome *Dormant Decrees* againſt him, which when he thinks he has run his *race*, ſhall yet defeat him of his *Crown*. Whether a reward thus ſtated will much animate mens diligence, I may leave every man to Judge by the like circumſtances in their ſecular concerns? and if they find they would there damp their courage, diſpirit and diſhearten them from attempting, there will be ſure more reaſon to conclude it in theſe *ſpiritual* Affairs, wherein our induſtry is commonly much leſs indefatigable.

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Dangerous to pry too curiouſly into God's Decrees which are ſecret and unſearchable.

6. But I ſhall no farther inſiſt on the ill conſequences of particular miſtakes; there is one *fundamental error*, which if it could be cur'd, would ſuperſeed all the reſt; I mean our bold folly in *medling with God's Decrees*, which we call hidden, and yet ridiculouſly confute that Epithet by pretending to know them. This is ſo much an inſolence as forfeits the compariſon, which might belong to it as an error; we ſee *ſecular States* jealouſly reſerve their *private Counſels*? and ſhall we think God ſo ſcrutable, our ſelves ſo penetrating, that none of his ſecrets can eſcape us? Or if we think him, as indeed he is, *unfathomable*, why do we thus madly attempt what we confeſs *impoſſible*? Eſpecially ſince we ſhall not only loſe the thing we ſo vainly purſue, but others which we might elſe enjoy. 'Tis as if a man ſhould be tranſported with a buſie earneſtneſs of knowing his Princes ſecrets, as quite to forget his *Laws*, and incur capital puniſhment. God has given us *rules of life*, which upon the ſevereſt penalties he requires us to ſtudy and practiſe; and we divert from theſe, and make it our buſineſs to trace his *Counſels*. We are gazing at the *Stars* to read our deſtiny, and look not to our *feet*; and by that negligent experiment the worſt fate they could have portended: For I think we may ſay our wild fancies about God's decrees, have in event reprobated more than theſe *Decrees*, upon which they are ſo willing to charge their ruin, and have bid fair to the damning of many, whom thoſe left ſalvable. And indeed 'tis to be expected from Divine Juſtice, that ſuch bold Inquiſitors ſhould find nothing but their own Deſtruction. That Ark which devoutly reverenc'd brought bleſſings, when curiouſly pried into diffus'd *Peſtilence* and *Death*, 1 *Sam.* 6. 19. Nay, the very *Poets* will tell us, that if we will have *Prometheus*'s Fire, we muſt take *Pandora*'s Box alſo: And ſure induſtry cannot be worſe laid out than thus to fetch home plagues, and while ſo much of it runs waſte to ſuch unhappy purpoſes, 'tis no wonder if we want for better; forget our calling by contemplating our *predeſtination*; and let the opinion of our *fate* be at once the Encouragement and Excuſe of our *ſloth*, than which nothing can more evacuate the purpoſe and deſign of our Chriſtianity, which Divines have truly defined to be not a *contemplative* but *active* Science.

The ſecond miſtake is concerning God's Atirbutes, and concerning his Juſtice.

7. To the ſame unhappy Effect concur our Miſtakes of *God's Attributes*, If I may call them Miſtakes which ſeem to be rather wilful Neſcience, they being ſo delineated to us both in his Word and his Providences, that 'tis not want of light, but winking againſt it that muſt leave us ignorant. What the *ſpeculative errors* are in this matter concerns not my preſent deſign to examin: But there ſeem to be ſome Miſperſwaſions concerning the *Divine Attributes*, which do remarkably tend in their conſequence and effect, to the corrupting *mens manners*; nay, look as if they were deſigned, and effectedly choſen for that purpoſe; I mean, eſpecially thoſe concerning his *Juſtice* and *Mercy*, which being the *Attributes* in which we have the moſt immediate Concern, the errors in them are the more noxious and deſtructive. Of this ſort, is that narrow ſcanty notion too many have of *God's Juſtice*, which we meaſure not by *him* but *our ſelves*, and therefore proportion it not according to his *infinity*, but our own *concerns*. That is an Attribute from which we promiſe to our ſelves no advantage, and therefore we are willing to contract and ſhrink it up, make it ſerve only as a *Cypher* to advance *mercy*, but are unwilling to underſtand it in its proper Extent; think it a *word of form* put in to compleat the greatneſs of God's Style, rather than any *intrinſick part of his nature*, which he muſt deny himſelf to put off.

3. Miſtakes concerning God's mercy and our unequal apprehenſions thereof.

8. Thus do we ſacrilegiouſly ſteal from God a part of his Being, and while other Sacrileges invade only his Patrimony, this commits a riot upon his very *nature*; yet as if he meant the Proverb ſhould indemnifie us, and *Exchange* extinguiſh the *Robbery*, we add to another attribute what we have defaulkt from this, and amplifie and extend his *Mercy*, as much as we confine and limit his *Juſtice*; That is the one infinite Ocean, wherein not only we, but himſelf muſt be ſwallowed up. We will think of him under no other notion, nor allow him to be any other thing but what ſhall be in ſubſerviency to this: We will have him powerful to *relieve* our Diſtreſſes, but not to *revenge* our Crimes; Wiſe to *defeit* the machinations of our Enemies, but not to *circumvent* our own indirect or impious Policies; All-ſeeing to *behold* our Wants and Griefs, but not to diſcern our cloſer Guilts; True to *perform* his Promiſes, but not his Threats. In ſhort, we model all that is in God to our own wiſhes; and inſtead of believing him what he is, fancy him what we would have him. Like *Micha, Judg.* 17. 5. *making us a God* for our own peculiar uſe, and forming the Diety we mean to worſhip. A ſtrange bold inverſion for Creatures thus to faſhion their Creator, put their own ſtamp or impreſs upon him, and ſhape him to their Fancies. And indeed it is nothing but *Fancy* that has to do in this Attempt, and accordingly it muſt vaniſh as the *operations* of that illuſive Faculty uſe to do. We may repreſent God to our ſelves as we pleaſe, but that has no more real *influence* on him, than a *deforming Optick-glaſs* has on the *Object* it diſguiſes, he is ſtill *the ſame* amidſt all our wild conceits of him, and will always make good the *title*, by which he delivered himſelf to *Moſes, Exod.* 3. 14. *I am that I am.* All that is in him is equally immenſe and infinite, his *mercy* need not invade his *juſtice* to gain it ſelf a larger field of action, which is already (as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks) *over all his works*; neither his *juſtice* encroach upon his *merey*, that having alſo a Province wide enough; all impenitent ſinners being within its Verge, and God knows how much ſoever we ſtraiten it in our opinions, we do indeed too much extend it in its *real force*, by rendring our ſelves the proper objects of it. In ſhort, God who is the Author of *order* and peace, cannot be ſuppos'd to be in *confuſion* within himſelf; the divine Attributes are not in *ſtrife*, but perfect *harmony*; 'tis we only that have rais'd this more than *Gigantick war*, not only *againſt* Heaven, but *in* it. The ſeveral *Luminaries* purſue the regular motion of the *Spheres*; but we confound at once the *Laws* of their Creation, and their *Author* too, ſtrive to eclipſe and darken *the father of light*. But if the removing of an earthly Land-mark be a crime puniſhable both by God and Man, what Thunder-bolts belong to thoſe who thus attempt to ſet new Boundaries to Heaven, to limit and meaſure out even the *divine Nature*, by the proportions of their own *Fancies*, and indeed ſuch temerity as this, is too like to confute it ſelf, and feel that Juſtice it will not believe; yet as great and daring a crime as it is, I fear there are few that can totally acquit themſelves of it: For though all diſavow it, yet he that ſhall narrowly ſearch his own heart, will ſcarce find it clear from all degrees of it. We are all apt to cheriſh a *flattering hope*, that God is not ſo ſevere as he is repreſented, or that if in reſpect of his Juſtice he be a *conſuming power*, yet that Mercy will be ſure to ſnatch us out of the *burning*; like the Angels to *Lot*, aſſiſt our eſcapes, and provide us a *Zoar, that our Souls may live*: And the Hope though founded only in our *wiſhes*, is very apt to ſlide into our *faith*, and make us believe what we would have. By which means this becomes a kind of *Epidemick* Hereſie, the moſt frequent and common miſperſwaſion that occurs concerning the Divine Attributes.

Which hath given occaſion to ſeveral dangerous errors in Religion, and particularly about the Nature and Duration of Hell Torments;

9. It would be a work more long than uſeful to recite the ſeveral errors that have ſprung from this one. That of *Origen*, that *the Devils ſhould finally be ſaved*, is a noted and pregnant Inſtance, which could be derived from nothing but this unequal apprehenſion of God's Juſtice and Mercy: And beſides all other ancient, we have many branches of a later growth, that ſpring from the ſame root, a ſet of plauſible falſities, which would quench the *unquenchable Fire*, and kill the *never dying Worm*; I mean thoſe allaying,, ſoftning deſcriptions ſome of this age have made of Hell, ſome changing the *kind*, others abating the *intenſeneſs*, or at leaſt the *duration* of thoſe Torments, each ſubſtracting ſo much from this *Tophet*, that they have left *Atheiſm* an eaſie Task to take away the reſt: And may give ſuſpicion they mean to viſit that place, which they are ſo induſtrious to make eaſie.

which is apt to abate the Fear and Terror thereof in the minds of bad men,

10. But whatever they do themſelves, 'tis ſure this is the way to ſend others thither, to take off their fears of it, to make them think it not ſo dreadful a place as they once ſuppos'd, and conſequently leſs careful to decline the ways that lead to it. 'Tis indeed too obvious that ſuch perſwaſions do mightily impugn Chriſtian Practice, and embolden men in ſin: And God knows we need no ſuch encouragement; the more general fallacious hopes of Mercy being too ſufficient for that purpoſe without theſe ſupernumerary deceits: But between one and the other, *Libertiniſm* is like to outgrow all reſtraints, and the opinion of God's goodneſs inſtead of *leading men to repentance*, will ſlacken thoſe Reins wherewith our brutiſh Nature ſhould be bridled and reſtrained, and we thus left unto the ſway of luſt and paſſion, muſt run head-long upon ruin, *as the horſe ruſheth into the Battel*. For alas, we are not ſo *generous* as to do well for Vertues-ſake, nay, nor ſo *provident* as to do it for Reward; 'tis our fear that is the moſt prevalent incentive, and accordingly we find Religion generally makes her firſt impreſſions there. They are *the terrors of the Lord* that do moſt uſually, and moſt effectually *perſwade men*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 11. our Hearts muſt be pricked, and at thoſe Orifices Piety enters. Now when all theſe terrors ſhall be ſuperſeeded by the opinion of an overwhelming mercy, when *Hell* ſhall either be annihilated, or ſuppos'd ſo to annihilate us, that we ſhall loſe our paſſiveneſs with our being, and be as uncapable of ſuffering, as even *Heaven* it ſelf can make us, what will be left to engage us to *vertue*, or deter us from *vice*? Alas, do we not often ſee a daring Luſt bid *Battel* to all the artillery of Heaven, meet God in his loudeſt Thunder, and venture on *damnation* in its dreadfulleſt form? And can we think it will be more modeſt; when it ſhall be told that they are only edgeleſs weapons it hath to encounter? That God's Thunder amidſt all its noiſe carries no *bolt*? And that the flames of the bottomleſs pit, are but a painted fire, that at a diſtance may fright, but not hurt us, or at leaſt ſo hurt us, that we ſhall not feell it? When thoſe rubs which fear interpos'd are thus remov'd, there is nothing to ſtay the courſe of headlong riot, but precipitiouſly it will on, whereever *ſtrong deſire* ſhall drive, or *flattering luſt* allure: He that loved his ſin, even when it threatned him *ruin*, ſerved it aſſiduouſly, when it promiſed no other wages than *death*, *Rom.* 6. 23. how will he hug this *viper* when he thinks 'tis ſtingleſs, and give up his ear to be bored by that *Maſter*, which affords him preſent pleaſures without future ſtripes? We ſee even in Civil Matters the *preſumption* of Impunity is the great nurſe of Diſorders, and if it were not for the *coercive* power of Laws we ſhould ſoon ſee how little the *directive* would ſignifie; and doubtleſs 'tis the ſame in ſpiritual or rather worſe, by how much we are more bent upon the breaking

ings of God's Laws than Mens, and conſequently will be the more apprehenſive of any Encouragement.

and encourageth them to ſin through hopes of impunity.

11. Of the truth hereof our experience gives too ſad proof, none ruſhing ſo boldly upon God's *juſtice*, as thoſe who have moſt fortified themſelves againſt the dread of it, as if they meant their practice ſhould experiment the truth of their *ſpeculation*, and make the utmoſt tryal whether God can be provok'd or no. Indeed men uſe *mercy* as amaz'd Paſſengers ſometimes do a *plank* in a ſhipwrack, lay ſo much weight upon it, as ſinks both it and themſelves; ſo periſhing by too great a confidence of their reſcue, and finding a *Gulph* where they expected an *Ark*: Not that I ſuppoſe Mercy unable to ſupport the weight of all the *Perſons*, nay, and all of the *ſins* in the world, which have not the one ponderous *adherent* of Impenitence ſuperadded; but that is a burthen which even the divine *Clemency* ſinks under, refuſes to plead ſuch a cauſe, and refers it to *Juſtice* as its proper Court: And therefore to ſin on, in hope of mercy, is to undermine our ſelves, and commit a folly as abſurd as ruinous; I wiſh I could ſay 'twere not alſo as frequent: But God knows 'tis every where too apparent; men openly avow it, ſo that 'tis become the vulgar anſwer to every convicting Reproof, that *God is merciful*: And ſurely they that obſerve the growth of vice, ſince our new deſcriptions of Hell came abroad, will have cauſe to think the one has had no ſmall influence on the other, and that while ſome have made it borrow the uneaſineſs of our humane ſtate to make up its torments; they have taken care it ſhould be juſt, and lend us back ſins of a greater magnitude. This miſerable traffick have theſe Factors ſettled, between the preſent World and the infernal Region, that Hell ſhall have Earth's pains, and Earth Hell's *wickedneſs*; the latter, alas, we are too fully poſſeſt of, which is like to ſend too many ſouls to diſcover the deceit of the other. In fine, our groundleſs confidences of mercy, and thoſe other *Chimæra's* we forge out of that, are certainly the moſt frequent and dangerous underminers of Chriſtian Practice: Theſe like the *Sun* give heat and vigour to thoſe inordinate luſts which a juſt *fear of vengeance* would as a Winter's froſt nip and deſtroy: And till we lay by theſe eaſie ſlight thoughts of God, and conſider him in thoſe more awful attributes which exact our reverence, his *mercy* will only ſerve to ripen us for his judgment; that ſmooth and gentle property in God, which to all who abuſe it not, is indeed the *Oyl of gladneſs*, will, thus perverted, acquire the more fatal quality of Oyl, ſerve only to intend our *flames*, and remove us far from the *rewards* of Piety, as bold *fancies* have done from the *practice*.

Miſtakes concerning the Providence of God, and firſt, In thoſe that deny a Providence;

12. A Third ſort of miſtakes there are by which Piety is obſtructed, and thoſe are ſuch as concern *Gods Providence*, about which the world has long ſince had many diſputes; ſome entirely denying it, as preſuming God ſo wholly taken up with the contemplation and enjoyment of his own felicity, that he is utterly inconſiderate of that of his creatures, and an unconcern'd *ſpectator* of humane affairs; others limitting and reſtraining it to thoſe things only, which themſelves were pleas'd to think worthy of the divine inſpection and conduct: But theſe queſtions have been more bandied among *Philoſophers* than *Chriſtians*, and therefore are beyond our preſent enquiry. Yet give me leave by the way to expreſs my fears, that theſe errors have yet ſome ſecret rooting in too many hearts; that there are many who rather formally *ſay*, than cordially *believe*, That God governs the World, and diſpoſes as well of *humane* as *divine* things; ſuſpicion that is rendred too probable by thoſe indirect arts men uſe, to poſſeſs themſelves of ſecular advantages; for did they ſeriouſly think, that all thoſe things

are in God hands, from whence they are neither ſtrong nor cunning enough, either to wreſt or pilfer them, 'tis ſcarce imaginable they ſhould attempt ſuch painful impoſſibilities, diſquiet themſelves in vain, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, and which is worſe, forfeit all title to them as God's gift, by thus aſſuming to make them their own. But this is a diſquiſition I muſt leave every man to make in his own heart; only let me ſay, that he that has there any doubt of God's univerſal or particular providence, has alſo in it the root of all *unchriſtian Sins* of Diſtruſt, Solicitude and Fraud: There being nothing, that can effectually ſuperſede our own carkings and contrivances for our ſelves, but the aſſurance that God cares for us. Men being ſtill apt to ſcramble, where there is none from whom they expect an orderly and ſufficient deſtribution, and therefore this error whereever it is found, may well be reckon'd among the impeders of Chriſtian duty.

2. In ſuch as go about to fathom the deſigns of it

13. But beſides thoſe, who thus doubt of Providence, there are others liable to great miſtakes, I mean thoſe who to their *juſt belief* of God's Providence, ſuperadded a *groundleſs confidence* of their own skill in fathoming it; that are not content to know it in its *product* and event, but pretend to diſcern it in its moſt ſecret *deſignments* and purpoſes; and do not ſo much *reverſe* God's diſpenſations as *interpret* them. I do not here mean to condemn all *particular application* of providential Events, which are ſometimes ſo extraordinary and remarkable, that they are their own *expoſitors* and point out the *conſtruction* we are to make: And an humble advertence unto ſuch, is not only innocent but neceſſary: But when men ſhall attempt to read every line in *God's hand*, to make their own inferences from every efflux of Providence; theſe pretenders to *divine Palmiſtry* ſeem to differ only thus much from thoſe, who make a trade of the *natural*, that they cheat *themſelves* as well as *others*.

3. In thoſe that would have a hand in the execution of it.

14. Yet there want not ſome who have not gone yet farther, and think not only to *underſtand* Providence, but *aſſiſt* it: Not only trace it in all its intricate windings, and concealed *intentments*, but help it in the execution, and gave birth to its *conceptions*: Of this ſort eſpecially are thoſe, who having poſſeſt their brains with ſome conjectural expoſitions of obſcure prophecies, will adminiſter to providence, and call out thoſe events they expect: And as if they were concious that God would not make good their dreams, endeavour to do it themſelves. This age has afforded too many inſtances of this, when the *fulfilling of Propheſies* has by ſome been made the ſolemn ſummons to *rebellion and blood*: And in order to the *hating and deſtroying of the whore*, *Rev.* 17. 1. men have been animated to hate and deſtroy who are not infected with their own Frenzy. This we know has been call'd the *helping of the Lord againſt the mighty*, and ſomething more than votive Curſes awarded to thoſe who refus'd to aſſiſt. Thus have they firſt wildly miſtaken, and then no leſs wildly out-run God's deſigns: As if like *Baal*, *Judg.* 6. he were unable to plead for himſelf, to vindicate his own cauſe, or effect his purpoſes without their help: And having reſolved what he ſhall do, obtrude themſelves upon him as his inſtrument; how repugnant ſuch *anticipations* of providence are to the *intereſts* of Chriſtianity is too apparent from the many *deteſtable effects* they have produc'd.

God's favour not to be concluded either way from the Events of Providence,

15. But ſetting aſide theſe, let us return to thoſe we ſpake of before, who preſuming to expound Providential Events, make them the *Criterion* by which to judge both of *perſons* and of *cauſes*, concluding the one loved or hated, the other approved or diſalowed by God according to their *proſperous* or *adverſe* Succeſs. The firſt of theſe was by our Saviour exploded, as an undue way of proceſs in the *Jews*, in the caſe of the *Galileans*,

and before him *Solomon* had given it as a Maxim that *no man could know love or hatred by all that is before him*, *Eccl.* 9. 1. And if under the *Jewiſh Oeconomy*, where temporal Bleſſings made up ſo great a part of their Promiſes, it was ſo; much more is it under the *Goſpel*, whoſe frame and compoſure is quite diſtant; which inſtead of propoſing ſecular proſperities to its *proſelytes*, aſſures them the contrary; ſets up the Croſs as the Standard under which they are to fight, and affords no temporal Hopes, but with an allaying *proviſo* of Perſecutions and Afflictions; nay, the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* goes farther, makes them not only *incident* but *neceſſary* to Chriſtians, the badge and cognizance of Sonſhip, whilſt the *no chaſtening* is the fatalleſt Sign, a *token of baſtardy* and abdication, *Heb.* 12. 7, 8. And doubtleſs the experience of every Chriſtian aſſerts the doctrine; we are all apt with the *Prodigal* to forſake our father's houſe, and as long as we can have the riot and not the wants, ſhall never think of returning; we muſt be famiſht into conſideration, and our *husks* alone will ſend us home to the *fatted Calf*. And can there be a greater indulgence in God than thus to make our Iniquity our Puniſhment, that it may not be our Ruine? To embitter thoſe ſenſualities whoſe luſciouſneſs ſerves to intoxicate us, and to clip thoſe wings which he ſees carry us from him? Stories tell us that the *Trojan* Wives after the *deſtruction* of their Country, being wearied with their reſtleſs vagrant life, neceſſitated their Husbands to a *ſettlement* by *burning* their Ships. And the ſame kind ſtratagem God has upon us: He ſees that our worldly acceſſions do rather enlarge than fill our appetites, and carry us on to farther purſuits, and by drawing us ſtill more from him the Centre of reſt, expoſe us to endleſs wandrings, and then what can be kinder than to reſcue us from ſuch a condition, that Curſe of *Cain*, to be a *fugitive and a vagabond in the earth*? To deprive us of our treacherous proſperities, and fire thoſe ſhips wherein we are preparing like *Jonah to flee from the preſence of the Lord*; ſo by a happy neceſſity forcing us to fix our ſelves on him. And this is the worſt God deſigns us in every adverſity; And did we mean but as well to our ſelves, we ſhould not miſs of receiving the happieſt Effects, even that *peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs* the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, *Heb*, 12. This holy man ſo well underſtood, that we find them dread nothing ſo much as an uninterrupted proſperity; they, like the *Muſcovite* Women, grew jealous of God's love when he forbare to ſtrike; upon which ſcore it is, that in the Ancient Fathers, there are ſo many ſolemn petitions for ſtripes; ſuch importunate ſollicitations for the *medicinal corrections*, wherein they judg'd both God's *kindneſs* and their own *ſafety* to conſiſt.

We muſt not judge of his love, by worldly proſperity;

16. And then how perverſe, how prepoſterous are our meaſures, when we conclude quite the other way, eſtimate *God's love* only from *outward ſucceſſes*, and think he is never angry but when he ſmites? A Perſwaſion, which as it is very falſe in its *grounds*, ſo very pernicious in its *effects*, and creates hopes and fears, as fallacious as it ſelf. For firſt, if we apply it to our ſelves, it produces miſchiefs proportionable to the divers ſtates under which we are. If a man be full and proſperous, it makes him *proud* and *ſecure*, for when he he has not only the poſſeſſion of thoſe things the World values, but takes them as an atteſtation of God's peculiar kindneſs and approbations, what ſhould make him either conſider or reform his guilts? If he have ſanctity enough to poſſeſs him of God's favour, and all theſe profitable effects of it, he will not eaſily be perſwaded he needs more: And any man that ſhall tell him he does, ſhall be heard with the ſame indignation wherewith *Crœſus* entertained *Solon*, when he found him queſtion that happineſs which he expected he ſhould have *admired*. Proſperity is in it ſelf an emboldening thing,

but when backt by this opinion of it, grows into all inſolence, till at laſt it even recoil in the face of the Donor, and dare God by all thoſe enormous riots, to which it *enables men.*

nor of his hatred by outward croſſes and affliction.

17. On the other ſide, this opinion preſents a leſs *merry*, but no leſs *dangerous* Temptation to thoſe in adverſity; for when they ſhall look on *themſelves* only as the *Anvil* for God's ſtroaks, they will be too apt to compleat the *parallel* by anſwering it in hardneſs and inflexibility; have the ἀντίτυπον νȣ͂ν as the Father calls it, which reverberates the blow on him that gave it. Perſevering wickedneſs is ſo naturally the iſſue of Deſperation, that we find the *Jews* take up the one meerly to countenance the other, pretend *hopeleſsneſs* to avoid *reformation*: Thus we find it, *Ezek.* 33. 10. *Our Iniquities are upon us, and we pine away in them, how ſhould we live?* And again more plainly, *Jer.* 18. 12. *There is no hope*, and then the inference is ready, *Let us walk every one in his own ways.* Endeavour is the child of hope, and we attempt not to atone one whom we conclude implacable: So that Wrath may *conſume*, but will never *melt* us, 'tis Love only that has that ſoftning, diſſolving Power, and unleſs we diſcern a mixture of that in God's *inflictions*, they will never render us *melleable* to his *impreſſions*. We kiſs a Fathers hand and rod, when an Executioner's ſtroak we ſuffer rather than bear. St. *John* tells us *we love God becauſe he loved us*, 1 *John.* 4. 19. I wiſh all men would make good the Inference; but 'tis ſure they are too apt to do it in the reverſe, and will hate if they apprehend themſelves hated; a ſtate which at once exemplifies and anticipates the worſt part of *Hell* to us, yet very incident to thoſe who interpret every ſtroak of God's, as the effect of enmity and utter averſion. This is to do that to our ſelves which the *Devils* ſo deſperate from Chriſt, to *torment us before our time*, it being peculiar to the vengeance of the other World to be meerly punitive, that here being rather *diſcipline* than *vengeance*, deſign'd to reduce not to deſtroy us: And indeed beſides the pain of ſenſe which this error creates, it does (to perfect the Hell) give that *of loſs* alſo; deprives us of one of the great Evangelical *felicities*, that of *rejoycing in Tribulations*, which our Saviour thought ſo conſiderable, as to inſert amongſt his Beatitudes: And his Apoſtles frequently mention it triumphantly as the great *priviledge* and *prerogative* of a Chriſtian. For if all adverſe ſucceſſes be a note of God's diſfavour, there will be no place for joy even in the moſt pious ſufferings. St. *Steven*'s raviſhing proſpect will be intercepted, and a *Martyr*'s death be as unconformable as a *Malefactor*'s. But if theſe were the only ſufferings to which joy were annext, there would be but too few concerned in the depravation; thoſe wherein we are more univerſally intereſted, are thoſe Chaſtiſements of God which our Guilts provoke; which though in reſpect of their *cauſe* they are Matters of the greateſt ſadneſs, yet in regard of their ſignificancy and *effect*, they are grounds of comfort; they ſignifie that God (however diſpleas'd) yet has not abandon'd the care of us; thinks us worth his *correction*, and deſigns our *reducement*: And the effect will (if not obſtructed by us) be anſwerable to that deſign: Our *Chaſtening* here reſcues us from the *ſins*, and conſequently the *condemnation of the World*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 32. and this is ſure no ſlight motive of rejoycing; and we are very unjuſt to God and our ſelves, if we will exchange it for the ſullen murmurs of a deſperate incorrigibleneſs.

Not to envy any man for his proſperous eſtate;

18. And as this perſwaſion is thus *pernicious* in reflection on *our ſelves*, ſo neither is it more *innocent* when applied to *others*; for firſt, if we look on the men that proſper in the World, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 73. 12.

we ſhall too often find them anſwer the *character* he gives them in the former part of the *Pſalm*, and when from their temporal affluence we ſhall conclude God's favour to them, 'twill be hard reſiſting the *temptation*, which (without that Argument) the *Pſalmiſt* was under, of thinking it *vain to cleanſe our hearts or waſh our hands in innocency*. Nay, we ſhall be apt to joyn our ſuffrage to thoſe in *Malachy* 3. 15. and call the *proud*, *happy*. And if we eſteem them ſo, 'tis natural to deſire to be like them; ſo we ſhall quickly grow to deſpiſe a poor or *afflicted Innocence*, and embrace all thriving *proſperous ſins*.

nor miſjudge him for any trouble or calamity that may befal him here.

19. On the other ſide, if we look on others in an adverſe, calamitous ſtate, this opinion ſuggeſts hard and ſevere ſentences concerning them, inclines us to judge where we ſhould ſuccour, and how great an accumulation of Miſery that is, we may learn from *Job*, whom we find not ſo often nor ſo paſſionately complaining of any of his *preſſures*, as of the unkind *cenſures* of his Friends, who weighing in this deceitful balance of temporal ſucceſſes, made very falſe judgements of him, and as if they were to glean after Satan, endeavoured to diſpoil him of that only comfort his malice had left, the conſcience of his Innocenſy. This is as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *to perſecute him whom God has ſmitten*, and *to talk to the grief of thoſe whom he hath wounded*; a thing repugnant to the common temper of humanity, and much more to that tenderneſs, thoſe affections and bowels Chriſtianity requires; and therefore in this reſpect alſo, we may reckon this perſwaſion very injurious to Chriſtian duty.

We muſt govern our actions by God's laws, and not his providence.

20. Nor is it leſs ſo when we applied to *Cauſes*, in which it is full as deceitful a Rule as it is in *Perſons*: God has deſigned us another meaſure of our undertakings; his *Word* and *Law*, by the general proportions whereof, we are to ſquare and accommodate our particular *actions*: He ſends us not to his *providence*, and the various diſtributions of that, or allows us to judge of the *Juſtice*, by the *Succeſs* of our *Attempts*. If that were the tryal, 'twere impoſſible for any enterprize to be lawful, ſince that which ſhould legitimate it, is ſubſequent to it, and can have no influence on it, to the making it good or bad: And as it does not make, ſo neither does it infallibly ſignifie it to be either: And of thoſe who preſume it does, I ſhould ask whence it came to do? If by an aſſignation of God, let them produce it; and if not thence, I'm ſure it can make no pretence to certainty, God having no where obliged his *Providence* to make good our *fancies* and *conjectures*. Nay, if we look into Scripture-examples, we ſhall find this irrefragable confuted; the ſame cauſe having at ſeveral times differing ſucceſs. Thus the *Iſraelites* were diſcomfited at their firſt aſſault upon *Ai*, and yet ſucceſsful after; 'twas ſomething extrinſick to the cauſe that made the variation, that ſtill continuing the ſame. The like we find in the caſe of the *Benjamites*, who though in as ill an engagement as can well be imagined, had yet two victories over the other Tribes, *Judges* 20. But there is one inſtance that may ſerve for all, and that is the taking of the Ark by the *Philiſtines*: He that ſhall contemplate that, will ſure never think fit to meaſure cauſes by ſucceſs, unleſs he will give the difference alſo to *Dagon*, who then triumpht in the ſpoils of the God of *Iſrael*. In ſhort, 'tis evident, victories are not ſo entailed upon the juſteſt cauſes, but that they may be, and often are cut off, either by the guilts of the undertakers, or ſome other ſecret diſpoſal of the Divine Wiſdom; but the former is ſo frequently the obvious cauſe of it, that we are not often put to reſort the latter. 'Tis no ſtrange thing to ſee all *Iſrael* troubled by an *Acan*, or have the *Ark* taking captive from off the ſhoulders of *Hophni*

and *Phineas*, nor will it ever be poſſible for the beſt cauſe to ſecure it ſelf from the blaſting influence of its Abettors crimes.

The ſlightest pretences are made uſe of to excuſe ſin after 'tis once committed.

21. This is ſo clear and evident a Truth, that 'tis matter of ſome wonder, how the contrary perſwaſion ſhould ever inſinuate it ſelf; and indeed it is not probable it ever had, if Intereſt, that grand *Sophiſter*, had not introduced it. Men engage in deſigns not on intuition of their *lawfulneſs*, but *profit*; and when they are ſuch as nothing can warrant *a priore*, their only reſerve is to make them good *a poſteriore*; to bring a licence after the fact, and juſtifie their beginning by their end; which, how ridiculous ſoever it may ſeem to ſober reaſon, yet ſuch is the natural ſhame, or ſecular inconvenience of owning an *unjuſt Act*, that men will wrap themſelves though in the thinneſt and moſt *diaphanous veils*, make uſe of the abſurdeſt *pretences*, and fainteſt *colours* to ſhadow their *Guilt*, and whilſt conſciouſneſs bids them ſay ſomething for themſelves, and the caſe affords no ſolid plea, they are driven to theſe deplorable ſlights and ſubterfuges. Indeed this is an argument that ſtands ſingle, and is ſeldom uſed but in thoſe cauſes that admit of no better; which we reaſonably conclude to be the reaſon, why it was ſo much inſiſted upon by our late diſturbers, which in ſuch *abundance of light*, as they own'd, could not be ſuppoſed *ignorant* enough to believe themſelves: 'Twas certainly the deſtitution of better arguments that caſt them upon this, forced them to ranſack the *Alconan*, and rifle a piece of *Turkiſh Divinity* to make good their *Saintſhip*. They now diſcern the unskilfulneſs of that *plea*, which a little time has converted to an accuſation. The great change it has pleas'd God to make among us, retorting their conquering *Syllogiſms*, and making them need a new ſucceſs to juſtifie their vaunts of the old. God grant we may not here relieve them again, and by our perſonal ſins, help them to that which the juſtice of their Cauſe never did, nor is like to acquire them.

Another miſtake of Providence to judge of thegoodneſs of any cauſe by its ſucceſs;

22. But though this *plea* of ſucceſs be frequently urg'd in *policy*, yet it prevails with many who know not that it is ſo; indeed the *vulgar* are ſo much ſubjected to their *ſenſes*, that generally the concluſions drawn thence are eaſily embrac'd, when thoſe from Reaſon and Conſcience have a double difficulty, firſt to be underſtood, and next to be admitted, and the moſt *elaborate diſcourſe* ſhall not convince them of the right of that cauſe, which in the laſt appeal to God's Tribunal by War, has been openly condemn'd, whilſt the *ſpoils* of victory as mnch ſatisfie the underſtanding of the *juſtice* of the Prize, as the Deſire with the *wealth* or *glory* of it. And this is it which renders ſuch kind of arguings very pernicious, they being ſo fitted to the common temper, that they ſeldom miſs to be effectual; and engage the *heady multitude* in the Proſecution of the worſt deſigns, that are recommended to them by the one *Catholick vertue* of Succeſs. This is indeed as the *Prophet* ſpeaks, *Ezekiel* 13. 22. *To ſtrengthen the hands of evil doers, that they turn not from their wickedneſs*; to dazle their Eyes ſo with the ſplendor of proſperous iniquity, that they can never come to take an exact view, and diſcern it in its true form: And doubtleſs this was none of the leaſt-prevailing arts of ſeducement among us, and and drew-in many to abet thoſe ſeditious practices, which all laws of God and Man prohibibitted, and whereby *Chriſtians Religion* has at once been violated and defam'd: has not only *her precepts* broken, but *her ſelf* aſperſt with the foul conſequencies of that diſobedience, and ſo buys one injury with another; the contempt of her *Authority* with the loſs of her *Reputation*.

23. We

yet God intends our good by all his Providential Diſpenſation.

23. We have now ſeen the *ill conſequencies* iſſuing from theſe miſtakes of God's *Providence*, but we muſt take notice that there remains yet as great or greater danger on the other ſide; and that a *total neglect* is worſe than an *erroneous conſtruction* of it. For though God have ſeculed us from that more exact minute diſcerning of his purpoſes, yet he means not his *diſpenſations* ſhould be lookt upon as wholy inſignificant, and therefore has given us a general ſcope and meaning of them, according to which we are to limit and reſtrain our *wandring gueſſes*, and alſo judge of *particular events*. Now as God's original and primary *deſign* in the creation of Man, was to render him a *ſubject capable of eternal happineſs*; ſo alſo have all his *ſubſequent Acts* towards him aim'd at the ſame end: And becauſe there is nothing removes man ſo far from that grand purpoſe of his Being as Sin; therefore God has made the ſuppreſſing of that the univerſal intendment of his diſpoſals concerning us: So that the moſt different diſpenſation do ſeverally purſue that one end; *proſperity* and *adverſity* in their ſucceſſive changes are ſent to reclaim us from the *error of our ways*, with this only difference, that the *one* leads the *other* drives. This is aſſerted by S. *Paul*, who tells us, That *the goodneſs and long-ſufferings of God is to lead us to Repentance*, *Rom.* 2. 5. And alſo that when we are judg'd, *we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the World*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 32. And indeed the whole Scripture runs in the ſame ſtrain; and both from proſperous and adverſe ſucceſſes urges the obligation to obedience. This is the notice God expects we ſhould take of all his dealings toward us. And the want thereof we find often ſharply upbraided by God to the *Jews*: how often does he recount his redeeming them from *Ægypt*, his enſtating them in *Canaan*, and all his wonderful works for them, with an accuſing reflection upon their ingratitude; and that we may know his *Judgments* are no leſs to be accounted for, than his *Mercies*, we find him, *Amos* 4. making a *Catalogue* of them, and cloſing every period with this *Pathetick Reproof* of their obſtinacy, *Yet have ye not returned to me, ſaith the Lord.* In ſhort, God requires that we ſhould obſerve every turn of his *hand*, in order to the reforming our own *lives*, and by the ſeveral *mediums* of *Gratitude* or fear, infer that *neceſſary concluſion* of a ſincere *univerſal Obedience*; and the neglect of this is the crime the *Pſalmiſt* mentions, *Pſalm* 28. 5. with ſo ſevere a menace, *They regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands.*

National reformation is deſigned by national mercies and judgments.

24. And as this is requir'd from ſingle perſons, ſo alſo from Societies and Communities, which as they are in their publick capacities the moſt eminent ſubjects of Judgments or Mercies, ſo are they the moſt eminently accountable for both. And though the Neglect and Abuſe of God's methods be a very provoking *guilt* when 'tis only *perſonal*, yet is it much more ſo, when it becomes *national*: And therefore as it is every man's concern for his own peculiar to examine how he has anſwered God's methods towards him, ſo is it an enquiry very pertinent in relation to the *Publick* alſo (eſpecially where the diſpenſations have been remarkable and extraordinary; in which reſpect the *Inquiſition* cannot appear more neceſſary for any than *this Nation*; upon which conſideration I hope the Reader will think it no unpardonable digreſſion, if we a while turn aſide after it.

God expects our returns ſhould be anſwerable to what we receive.

25. It is the *affirmation of our Bleſſed Saviour*, that *where much is given, there ſhall be much requir'd*; a thing ſo conſonant with natural Equity, that we all give our ſuffrage to it, by making it the meaſure of our expectations in ſecular things, wherein every man looks for *returns* proportio-

nable to his *expence* or Induſtry. The Husbandman expects a *Crop* anſwerable to his *Seed* and *Labour*: And in the nobler *cultures* of the Mind, we juſtly exact of our Pupils to let their *manners* atteſt the *diſcipline* they have been under: According to which eſtimate we muſt reſolve, that God's expectations from us of *this Nation* cannot but be very high, there being no people under the Sun, whom he has more ſignaliz'd as his *own immediate* care, on whom the *Divine Oeconomy* has more conſtantly and even ſolicitouſly attended in all the variety of ſeaſonable and powerful *applications*.

This Nation hath been bleſt with many mercies, which we have abuſed and forgot;

26. I ſhall not aſſume the work of a *Chronicle*, by giving a ſeries of all thoſe mercies we reciv'd in the loyns of our Anceſtors; and of which we have provided one unhappy memorial, I mean our nauſeating and diſpiſing them; it having been the buſineſs of our days to diſ-intail thoſe two moſt ineſtimable Bleſſings, of a *pure Religion* and *outward Peace*, which our immediate Progenitors left us, and to derive to our poſterity the contrary miſchiefs of impiety and confuſion.

and been exerciſed lately with variety of judgements and calamities,

27. But not to ravel ſo far back, I ſhall confine my reflections to ſo late a date, that I ſhall not need to beſpeak the faith afforded to *Hiſtorians*; ſcarce any that can be my *Reader*, but is qualified to be my *witneſs* too; and muſt acknowledge that there has on God's part been no Method wanting, that might purifie us to himſelf *a Peculiar people zealous of good works*. To that end of refining and cleanſing us it was, that he kept us ſo long in the *furnace*, permitted us to thoſe many *Fiery Tryals* of our late calamitous days. 'Twere impertinent here to give a Deſcription of *thoſe ſufferings*, which every man's memory can ſo readily repreſent to him: Or to paint that *Flame* whoſe ſcorchings we have felt; 'tis enough to ſay, that *God* appeared in them, earneſtly induſtrious to have reduced us; like *a ſkilful Captain*, beſieg'd us cloſely, ſtraitned us ſo in all our intereſt, that it was ſcarce poſſible for us to fly any where but to himſelf. Indeed he that would make up an exact Catalogue of our Calamities, muſt calculate in how many inſtances humane nature may be paſſive; there being ſcarce any of our ſuffering capacities, to which they were not liberally opportioned, our *Eſtates*, our *Perſons*, our *Friends*, and which is more than all, our *Conſciences*, all groaning under the weight of that *Yoke*, which our own Sins prepar'd, and other mens ſins put on. Which way ſoever we look'd, we ſaw nothing but that which might conſume our *Eyes* and grieve our *Heart*: If on the Church, we ſaw that torn by *Schiſm*, ſpoiled by *Sacrilege*; the obomination of deſolation ſtanding in the Holy Place, and the *houſe of Prayer* made in the moſt literal ſence *a den of thieves*. If on the State, we ſaw the *breath* of our Noſtrils, the *Anointed of the Lord* taking in their *Pits*, *Impriſon'd*, and *Arraign'd*, and barbarouſly *Murder'd*, by thoſe who ſlew him, like the *Heir* in the Goſpel, that they might ſeize on his *Inheritance*. We ſaw this and all other Miſchiefs eſtabliſhed *by a Law*, and made as irreverſible as powerful malice could render them. And now in ſuch a diſtreſs, who would not think that ſuch a neceſſity ſhould have become our vertue? and ſo perfect a deſtitution compell'd our reſort to the Divine aid? And as little oppreſt States us'd to make themſelves homagers to the *Romans*, to engage their protection; ſo we ſhould have made an entire ſurrendry of our ſelves to *God*, that we might have gain'd a title to his reſcues and deliverances.

which yet have had no effect toward our repentance and humiliation;

28. This genuine and kindly effect I doubt not but it had in *ſome*, I would fain think in *many*; but we are not now conſidering *particulars*, but the *community*; and therefore how ſincere ſoever ſuch perſonal reformations were, they muſt not come under the account of publick and general,

neral, unleſs for their Number and Eminency they had been ſufficient to have overwhelmed the contrary perverſeneſs: Many there might be whoſe hearts (as 'tis ſaid of *Joſiah's*, 2 *Chron.* 34. 27.) did melt, and yet the far greater number of the obdurate, ſtill juſtly denominate us a *ſtiff-neck'd people*; an Epithet wherewith God often reproaches the *Jews*, and ſure we have no leſs evidenced our title to it: For alas, as if we had meant to revenge this inexorableneſs of our oppreſſors towards us, in our obſtinacy to God; as if when we could keep nothing elſe, we had yet reſerved this ſullen comfort of having our hearts impregnable, we made a ſhift to hold out againſt all thoſe batteries; there was little *appearance*, and leſs *realty* of Repentance; and if ſome of our *luſts* were at all leſs raging, 'twas only becauſe they were ſtarved into a little tameneſs, the *ſupplies* cut off which ſhould maintain our Riot: But when any recruits could be had, they were devoted that way, and even in the worſt of times we miſt not to be as luxurious as we were able: And as though we reſolved that *vice* like the *Sea*, ſhould gain in one part what it loſt in another; we took order that what was thus inevitably defaulkt from thoſe *expenſive* Sins, ſhould be made up in the *cheaper*: We could curſe, and ſwear and blaſpheme in ſpight of *Sequeſtration*, and this wretched Immunity we made abundant uſe of, till we became even *Proverbial* for it; and gave our enemies pretence to faſten it on us as our diſtinctive Character. Yet to ſhow our ſelves generous ſinners, there was *one vice* we bought at a dear rate, I mean ours as imprudent, as unchriſtian animoſities, and *picques* among our ſelves; a ſin that helpt to revenge all the reſt: And was as well upon a humane, as divine account, a grand inſtrument of our *ruin*. To theſe we may add our impatient murmurs at our ſufferings, which did in ſome work ſo prepoſterouſly, as to reconcile them to the inflictors, made them unworthily deſert that cauſe, they found chargeable to maintain, and contraay to the advice of *Solomon*, chuſe the ways of thoſe oppreſſors whoſe proſperity they envied, *Prov.* 3. But of theſe *real Apoſtates* the number I hope was not great, I wiſh I could ſay ſo alſo of thoſe *ſeeming deſertors*, whoſe knees bowed to *Baal*, though their hearts did not: Who belied their own *loyalty*, and in a ſhew of compliance proſtituted *conſcience* in ſeveral Engagements as inconſiſtent with each other, as they all were with duty; and ſuch as they pretend no excuſe for their *taking*, but their reſolutions of *breaking*. It was indeed a ſad ſpectacle to ſee what ſhoals every menacing Edict brought in; while men ran in as much haſte to take the opportunity of *Perjury*, as the Primitive Chiſtians were wont to do of *Martyrdom*: Indeed herein we ſeem'd to invade our enemies peculiar, would not ſuffer them to enjoy thoſe marks of diſtinction, they had framed to themſelves; ſo that as far as *Oaths* could ſignifie, we were all one Party. And yet while we thus diſclaim's God's reliefs by theſe indertict attempts of our own, we took it very ill that he left us to the ſucceſs of them: That he proſper'd not thoſe methods he had interdicted, and made us Triumphant, not only over our Enemies but himſelf too: And upon this ſcore many mutinous *blaſphemies* were utter'd, and perhaps ſome more thought; though I confeſs, generally we were not ſo modeſt, as to ſtick at ſaying the worſt we could think; and indeed they that heard the frequent doubts men owned of God's Juſtice, Providence, nay, his very Being, would not think they ſuppreſt any thing as too ill to be ſpoken: We laid boundleſs expectations upon the juſtice of our cauſe, and as if we had extreamly obliged God by not being *Traytors* or *Schiſmaticks*, thought he wronged us extreamly that he made us not *Victors*. *Samuel* tells *Saul*, that *Rebellion is like Witchcraft*; but we ſeemed to think

Loyalty was ſo; that like a ſpell, it was to keep us invulnerable, not only, againſt our Enemies but our Selves: And ſo countercharm all our crimes that they ſhould only be active to pleaſe not to hurt us, But if in the laſt place, we reflect on our ſelves even in relation to that *cauſe* in which we ſo much confided, 'tis to be fear'd all men will not be able to evince they ſuffered for *God* and the *King*, though they did it in their *quarrel*: 'Tis the Intent muſt denominate whoſe *Martyrs* they were, it being too frequent for private paſſions and intereſts to march under the banner of Conſcience; and we call that ſometimes taking up the *Croſs*, which is only the taking up an *animoſity* or *humour*. Indeed 'tis not poſſible for any to be God's *Martyr*, who is not firſt his *Servant*; none of us will ſuffer the greateſt things for a perſon for whom we will not do the leaſt; and 'tis abſurd Hypocriſie for a man to pretend he has left *all* for God, who we ſee cannot be wooed to leave the moſt deſpicable luſt for him. He that will not part with the noiſe of a loud *Oath*, the pleaſure of an intemperate *Cup*, the applauſe of a profane *Jeſt* for God, will ſurely much leſs expoſe his *liberty*, his *eſtate*, his *life* for him: And therefore what hazards ſoever any man ran in any of thoſe, he can with no juſtice ſet it upon God's account, unleſs he can produce ſuch other acts of obedience, as may witneſs this to be true and genuine. And upon this tryal, I fear *God's party* will appear to have been but ſmall among us, and perhaps *the King's* not much greater, it being not very probable that thoſe ſhould have any great ſenſe of duty to *him* that had none to *God*; or that thoſe ſhould religiouſly revere *one* Commandment, who diſpiſed the other *nine*. But we need not the help of inference and probability in this matter, the mutinous and inſolent behaviour of many who profeſt loyalty, did too clearly evince it: And as it is ſaid of *Job*, that he turn'd after *Adonijah*, though he turn'd not after *Abſalom*, 1 *King* 2. 28. and ſome of ours had little private rebellions of their own, even whille they oppos'd the more publick. I love not to paſs cenſures on men's thought, yet I doubt ſome would be too conſcious to confute me, if I ſhould ſay there wanted not thoſe, who owed their *zeal* to their *Spleen*, and did not ſo much love thoſe they fought *for*, as hated thoſe they fought againſt. And it may perhaps deſerve enquiry, whether that demure *pretence of holineſs* their Adverſaries had put on, did not more avert ſome of our *Libertines* from them, than all their *real crimes*: They perhaps ſo far miſtook them, as to ſuſpect they might be in earneſt, when they profeſt to advance the *power of Godlineſs*, and at that took an *Alarm*, and ſuch Men (if ſuch there were) contended not for the Liberty of their *Country*, but their *Luſts*; and could with no juſtice, expect either a reputation, or ſucceſs from that cauſe which they once helpt to defame and defeat. I am loath to go farther, and ſuſpect that even ſome of the devouter ſort were inſpired more by the Spirit of *oppoſition* than *Piety*; yet I confeſs 'tis hard to reſiſt that ſurmiſe, when 'tis conſider'd that our *Liturgie* never had its due veneration, but when the *Directory* was ſet up againſt it. Indeed he that ſhall remember how our *private Oratories* were then thronged and crouded; and ſhall now compare it with our *empty Churches*, will be tempted to think our *devotion* was of that ſort, which is excited by *interdict*, and deadned by *invitations*; a perverſe kind of Zeal kindled only by *Antiperiſtaſis* or colliſion; none of that pure flame which deſcends from Heaven. And then as our *Saviour* in another caſe ſays, *If the light that is in thee be in darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs? Matth.* 6. If this fairer and more ſpecious part of us were thus reproveable, how obnoxious were the other? And if our Earneſtneſs in a righteous cauſe, by its Siniſter motives or adherencies be unable to juſtifie it ſelf, how ſhall it bear that heavier task we laid on it, and plead for our other Guilts.

but we have increaſed our ſins with our ſufferings;

29. This is the true, tho not full account of our behaviour under *God's diſcipline*, thus did we fructifie upon his pruning us, brought forth indeed nothing but *degenerous fruit*. The *holy writ* leaves it as a brand of moſt inveterate Impiety upon *Ahaz*, that *in the time of his diſtreſs he ſinned yet more againſt the Lord*, 2. *Chron.* 28. 22. and ſure we have too juſt title to the ſame Character of Infamy; thoſe ſufferings which were ſent to chaſtiſe our ſins, ſerv'd but to encreaſe them, and like the *Iſraelites* in the *Brick-kilns*, they multiplied the more for their oppreſſion; we debaucht even our *Executioners*, and made every new calamity ſupply us with ſome new *Vice*, and now when God's *rod* was thus deſpis'd, we were in all reaſon to expect he ſhould draw his *ſword*, revenge our reſiſtance of his methods, by ſomewhat we ſhould not reſiſt, make our *Plagues* as obſtinate as our *ſelves*, and involve us in hopeleſs inevitable ruin. *This certain fearful looking for Judgment, Heb.* 10. 27. was all we had left our ſelves, of all the rich patrimony we were once poſſeſt of; and our preſent miſery ſeem'd impoſſible to expire any way but by dying into greater.

Yet God's mercy hath wonderfully appeared in our deliverance,

30. But as great Artificers are us'd to magnifie their Art, by chuſing the moſt unlikely materials; ſo did it pleaſe God in this total indiſpoſedneſs of ours, when we were ſo unapt ſubjects to illuſtrate his mercy, and as if he deſigned this *national deliverance* ſhould (in its proportion) be the Tranſcript of our more *univerſal Redemption*, he viſited us not only in his ſtate of miſery, but enmity; when we had ſet our ſelves in defiance of his *judgments* he laid, as it were, an Ambuſh of *mercy* for us, and ſurpriz'd us with ſafety: By ſuch undiſcernable ways *returned the captivity of our Sion*, that *we were* indeed delivered *like them that dream, Pſal.* 126. 1. gave us a *Victory* without a *war*; without the intervention of *garments rolled in blood, Eſay* 9. 5. inveſted us in our Triumphant robes, and in a word, made us inſenſibly to glide into our long forgotten proſperity.

which ought to have obliged into a ſuitable change and amendment

31. And now who can imagin, but this miraculous mutation *without* us, muſt alſo *work* a change *within* us? Indeed they muſt have a very ill opinion of humane nature, that can think it poſſible it ſhould have perverſeneſs enough to reſiſt ſuch endearments; ſuch kindly heat muſt needs be ſuppos'd to melt us; and if before our Pride diſdained to be compelled, yet even that ſtubborneſt part of us cannot object againſt the being courted into amendment. So that when God has thus yielded to our terms, left us not ſo much as a *Punctilio* in our way to Piety, 'tis but a reaſonable expectation we ſhould *embrace* it with as great an earneſtneſs, as it was formerly *rejected* by us.

But we have ingratefully defeated the deſigns thereof,

32. And would God we could ſay we did ſo; but alas, we ſtill affect prodigies, take a kind of wanton Joy in defeating God's deſigns, and as if we aſpired to vye Miracles with him, have made our *returns* as unparallel'd as his *mercies*; ſo that the ſumm of our account is this. No Nation was ever more ſignaliz'd by *God's goodneſs*, or its *own perverſneſs*, it being hard to determine, in which of thoſe reſpect it is moſt *eminent*. That this is in the general perfectly true, there are too many particulars ready to teſtifie, indeed a whole cloud of Witneſſes do concur to the proving the charge. I ſhall not undertake to examin *all*, yet *ſome* of the principal it will not be amiſs to take notice.

and almoſt loſt the ſence of our late miraculous Deliverance.

33. Before we enquire into the *uſe* we have made of God's Mercies, let us a little conſider what our *ſenſe* of them is; and ſure of all the *interrogatories* we can put to our ſelves, this appears the *eaſieſt*, the moſt gentle,

favourable Teſt, that even our own partialities could elect for us; it being ſo natural to men in miſery to value a reſcue, and celebrate their deliverers, that the contrary would be the only wonder; we ſee even the *Jews*, who were none of the moſt malleable people, yet deliverances made impreſſions on them ſet them to their *devout proceſſion*, and *ſolemn hymns* in praiſe of God: Nay, ſuch a piece of native Religion is this, that the *Heathens* exemplifie it to us. The *Philiſtines* when they had taken *Sampſon*, magnified their *Dagon*, as having *delivered their enemy and the deſtroyer of their country into their hands*, *Judg.* 16. 24. So upon the victory over *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 39. 9. *they ſent round about to publiſh it in the houſe of their Idols.* And in all ſtories we find, the *Heathen Altars* were never ſo loaden with Sacrifices, as upon ſuch occaſions: And the Goſpel tells us, that thoſe on whom Chriſt beſtowed miraculous cures, were ſo tranſported with them, that their gratitude ſupplanted their obedience, and made them, notwithſtanding his prohibition, proclaim the wonders he had done for them: But I fear if we reflect upon our ſelves, we ſhall not be able to match any of theſe inſtances. 'Tis true, our late *change* was entertain'd with a Joy *profuſe* enough, but not enough *religious*. We ſaw that great things were done for us, and thereof we rejoyced; but we did not ſo much conſider that the *Lord* had done for them, *Pſal.* 124. and ſo were rather affected with the *rarity* and *profitableneſs*, than the *mercy* and *kindneſs* of the Diſpenſation: And though the care of our *Governours* have provided for the religious part alſo, aſſign'd *days of purim* for the perpetual commemoration of our *deliverance*, yet our ſlight obſervance of them does too fully evince our Joy was meerly ſecular; and ſurely he that obſerved the numerous and loud *acclamations* in the *ſtreets*, and the few faint *Hallelujahs* in the *Temple*, muſt needs ſay they were very diſproportionate, and that how much ſoever the moſt of us rejoyc'd, it was not in the *Lord*: And then we are not to wonder that it was ſo tranſient; ſince it was meerly *earthly*, it muſt needs partake of the fadingneſs of its original: Whereas had we derived it higher, it would have been laſting and durable; it could not ſo ſuddenly have expired, had we fetcht it from him, *in whoſe preſence is fulneſs of Joy, and at whoſe right hand are pleaſures for evermore.* But alas, our tranſports were ſuch as exhauſted themſelves in their own noiſe, we expreſs'd our Joy in *Bonfires*, and it vapour'd away in the *ſmoke*; there wanted that mixture of Piety which ſhould have fixt that *volatile Paſſion*, and we who at firſt were much more glad than thankful, within a very ſhort time ceaſed to be either.

and grown mightily diſſatisfied with our preſent circumſtances.

34. And then as *violent Heats*, when once expired, are ſucceeded by the *extreameſt Cold*; ſo has it fared with us; we fell from our *Exſtacies* not to the mean, but the contrary extream; our vaſt complacencies at their parting, carried with them even ordinary contentation, and left us not only joyleſs, but impatient. It was indeed matter of equal ſhame and wonder, to ſee a ſcene ſo ſuddenly chang'd, wherein, as in many other inſtances, we ſeemed to have tranſcribed the copy of the mutinous *Iſraelites*, whom we find in the very ſame-Chapter, *Exod.* 15. triumphing and repining; and no ſooner were the Timbrels out of their *hands*, but Complaints were in their *mouths*, verſe 24. *What ſhall we drink?* And in the beginning of the next, with the ſame querulous importunity they require meat. But not to wrong them in the compariſon, their Murmurs had ſome extenuating circumſtances which ours have not; they lookt indeed with ſome appetite upon *Ægypt*, and made ſome propoſals of Return, but it was while they ſuffer'd the hardſhips of the *wilderneſs*; they preferred

a repleated *ſlavery*, before a hungry *freedom*? but even they, were not ſo frantick in their mutinies, as to make any ſuch offer in *Canaan*, or have any Emulation to the *Garlick* and *Onions*, amidſt the affluence of *Milk* and *Honey*: No, 'tis we Alone that have the unhappy skill of reconciling the ſins of *Canaan*, and the *Wilderneſs*; murmur as much under our *Vines* and *Fig-trees*, as at *Raphidim*, or *Marah*, and make all the out-cries of want and ſlavery, whileſt we wallow in the utmoſt luxury of Plenty and Freedom. I need not here ſpecifie the particulars of our Murmurings, this diſcourſe being not likely to find many whoſe innocence will need that information, this *malignant humour* having ſpread ſo, that 'tis now become almoſt a ſcandalous (becauſe a ſingular) thing to be contented. And certainly a conſidering Foreigner, that ſhould come upon us, could not but be aſtoniſh'd to ſee a Nation ſo full of all thoſe things which uſe to create temporal ſatisfactions, and yet to find no body in it ſatisfied; to ſee ſo many parties among us, and none proſperous. This is ſuch a riddle as would tempt a man to ſuſpect his ſenſes, and think we had all this while but dreamt of a reſtoration: been under the deluſion the *Prophet* deſcribes of the *hungry and thirſty man, that at his waking finds he is empty, and that his ſoul hath appetite*, *Eſay* 29. 8. 'Tis a ſad, but viſible truth, that all that God has done for us, hath been ſo far from filling our deſires, that it has only ſerved to enlarge them: for I appeal to any of our loudeſt mutineers, whether if ſome years ſince the preſent ſtate of affairs had been repreſented to them, dreſt in the worſt circumſtances they now complain of, they would not then have thought is extreamly amiable, worth *Rachel*'s prize of ſeven years more hardſhip; nay, whether they would not willingly have made ſome abatements, relinquiſht part of what they now enjoy, to have had the reſt ſecured? And when God has granted us all we then askt, ſhall we murmur becauſe we could *now* perhaps ask ſomething more, and like ingrate Debtors, pick a quarrel to evade payment? Was it not enough that he engaged his *Omnipotence* for us, but muſt his *Omniſcience* alſo be preſt upon the ſame ſervice? and provide all he could foreſee we could wiſh? Alas, do we think we have the ſame hank upon God, that ſome Gallants have on their truſting Merchants, that upon peril of loſing all former ſcores, he muſt ſtill go on to ſupply us? Shall we think nothing fit for oblivion but our obligations? And in this perverſe ſenſe tranſcribe *St Paul*, *Phil.* 3. 13. *Forgetting thoſe things which are behind, reach forward to the things which are before*: This indeed too fully ſpeaks us the off-ſpring of our firſt Parents; we find can no guſt in all the fruits of *Paradice*, if any one be denied us; and ſtill look not on what we *have*, but what we *want*; and as it is obſerved of the greedier ſort of creatures, that they reliſh not one bit for the vehement expectation of another: So is it with us, we devour, but do not *enjoy* our Bleſſings; and to require him to ſatisfie us is to aſſign him the *Poets* Hell, ſet them with *Belus*'s daughter to the task of filling a *ſieve* with water, or rolling *Siſyphus*'s ſtone; our growing appetites ſtill keeping us empty and reſtleſs amidſt all endeavours to make us otherwiſe; ſo that whereas God uſes to commit his *favours* to Men, as *ſeed* to the Earth, in Expectation of an *harveſt*, ſome fruits of gratitude and obedience; they ſeem with us rather to be flung into a *Gulph*, whoſe property is only to *ſwallow*, never to *fructifie*.

Our grievances nothing ſo great now as formerly.

35. I know men's *Minds* are ſo poſſeſt with their diſcontents, our daily mutinous blaſts have puft up and ſwelled our grievances to ſuch vaſtneſs, that he muſt expect to be very impatiently heard, that ſhall attempt

to repreſent them in a leſſer ſize; yet ſure 'twere not impoſſible even upon a direct view, to demonſtrate them very *light* and *moderate*: But upon a comparative, perfectly *trivial* and *inconſiderable*; and 'tis a little ſtrange, that we who bare our late ſuffering eſtate with ſo much Impatience, ſhould not have impreſſions enough left in our memory, to confront to all our preſent regrets. Do we not quietly now poſſeſs the fruits of our own, or our Progenitors *induſtry*, without danger of any Sequeſtration, but what our own Luxuries inflict? Are not our *Perſons* at freedom; deliver'd from that kind word, and unkind thing, SECURING? So that when we riſe in the Morning, we need not fear our next lodging ſhall be in the Goal or Dungeon; nor when we ſit down to our Meal, ſuſpect the intruſion of *armed uninvited Gueſts*, who e're whiles, we know, were wont to ſurprize us, as the Plague did the *Iſraelites*, *even while the meat was yet in our mouths*; are not our Lives under the Cuſtody of known Laws, ſo that no man is in danger that will but keep himſelf within thoſe *Boundaries*; nor need fear to be mockt into his Grave by ſhews and Pageantries of Juſtice? And beſides theſe real *eſcapes* from *ſlavery*, are we not reſcued from the moſt imbittering circumſtance of it, the having *ſervants rule over us*? A thing which rendred our ſubjection as mean and ſervile, as it was ſharp and preſſing, and which we were then ſo ſenſible of, that it never miſt to bring up the rear of our Complaints. Laſtly, If we reflect upon our higher ſpiritual concerns, are we not freed from thoſe boiſterous robuſt *temptations*, which with the violence of Famine and Sword, Beggary and Death aſſaulted our conſtancy, and left no mean between Martyrdom and Apoſtaſie? Are we not alſo reſtored to all thoſe ſpiritual advantages which we once profeſt ſo much to value? That Well of Life now lies open before us, after which we once panted like the *Hart* after the *water-ſprings*; our ancient *worſhip* is reviv'd, and wants only our attendance to make it ſolemn; whereas the abomination of deſolation ſtood in the holy place, our prayers were turned to ſin; needed, but were denied the *Liturgy* to pray againſt them, or atone their guilts. We have no longer *ſtones* given us for *bread*, nor experiment that ſad riddle, of being at once cloyed and ſtarved; amidſt exceſs of preaching ſuffering a Famine of the Word. And now are all theſe worth no regard? If they are not, why did we exclaim ſo loudly when we wanted them? If they are; why are we ſtill as querulous now we have them? 'Tis ſure, theſe include all our great and ſubſtantial intereſt as Men and Chriſtians, and thoſe being provided for, 'tis not eaſily imaginable what others we ſhould have important enough to make us querulous, unleſs it be thoſe of Paſſion and Humour. One man's *ambition* perhaps wants a ſatisfaction, another man's *avarice*, a third's *ſpleen*; and this *diſcord* makes up the very unmuſical Harmony of our *murmurs*. If we ſee but a *Mordacai* in the King's gate whom we wiſh removed, we can like *Haman* find no guſt in any thing we enjoy. If we ſee ſome, who we think have born leſs of the burden and heat of the day, rewarded equally or perhaps above our ſelves, we are ſure to make out the Parable by murmuring at the good man of the houſe: Or if *Nineveh* be ſpar'd, if all be not executed to whom we have denounced deſtruction, we like *Jonah* ſit down in a ſullen diſcontent, and grow weary of our lives, becauſe others are permitted to enjoy theirs. To theſe and other heads of the like nature, 'tis apparent our *grievances* may be reduced; and then if the balance be put into any diſpaſſionate hand, 'tis ſure they can never become a counterpoize to the other real benefits we enjoy, but will in the *Prophet*'s phraſe appear *lighter than vanity and nothing*.

Our fears and jealouſies afflict us more than our actual ſufferings.

36. But I ſuppoſe ſome will ſay, 'tis not only preſent uneaſineſſes of which they are impatient, but the poſſibility of future, a fear of relapſing into our former eſtate by the ill managery of our preſent: To theſe I ſhall anſwer, that admit it were ſo, yet ſure 'twill be no Wiſdom to anticipate our miſeries, to foreſtall diſcontents, and make foreſight as painful as actual ſuffering. In other forbidden inſtances we chuſe to enjoy the preſent, and with an *Epicurean* Indifferency cry, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 32. How is it that we here become ſo unluckily ſagacious, unleſs it be that murmuring is a Senſuality we account equivolent, nay, ſuperiour to all rational ſatisfactions; and therefore that we may have no intermiſſion of that delight, ſuborn our fancies to find occaſions, and fetcht in from the future thoſe ſupplies which the preſent affords not: But beſides this, I ſhould in the ſecond place ask theſe great *Diviners*, why they do not alſo foreſee, that this very *mutinous temper* of theirs is the moſt direct and infallible means of bringing thoſe *miſchiefs* they pretend to fear; that it is ſo, is moſt evident, and ſo well obſerv'd by our *Adverſaries*, that there is little doubt, they have not only pleaſure but deſigns upon it; and to that purpoſe have their *Engins* on work to blow up the *hot Spirits* among us, in expectation from thence to raiſe a *flame*. So blind a thing is *Paſſion*, that it it hurries on to the things which in their iſſue we moſt abhor; makes us our Enemies *drudges*, and the *forgers* of our own ſhackles; and whilſt we cry out of petty Indulgences, we our ſelves give them in the *lump*, what we grudge them in *parcels*: This is a miſerable infatuation, and while we act thus unreaſonably, we are ſure no competent declaimers againſt ill managery. But beſides this natural effect of our murmurs, we are alſo to remember that there is a Divine Vengeance attending it: When *bounties* and *largeſſes* are quarrell'd at, we neceſſiate God to another Method, nay indeed, not only his *vengeance*, but even his *kindneſs* ſeems to ſuggeſt it; when he ſees our conſtitutions ſuch, that his gentle applications work contrary effects, 'tis very oppoſite for him to try whether the *Antiperiſtaſis* will operate on the other ſide; If we ſmart thus under *lenitives*, 'tis but fit to eſſay, if *corroſives* will eaſe us; and the only remaining experiment for the making us *happy* is to make us *miſerable*.

Impoſſible to have our deſires compleatly ſatisfied in this world.

37. But would God we might yet prevent the need of ſuch unkindly expedients, and by a ſober eſtimate, and thankful ſenſe of what we have, provide to conſerve it: Not faſtidiouſly deſpiſe great and eminent bleſſings, becauſe perhaps they come not home to every part of our wiſhes. Alas, Thoſe plenary ſatisfactions agree not with the nature of Earthly things: 'Tis an obſervation long ſince rais'd from the Globular and Triangular form of the World and our Hearts, that 'tis impoſſible the one ſhould be filled with the other, there will ſtill be ſome angles, ſome vacuities left; our very acceſſions create new *wants*; and like an unſound limb, the healing of one Sore is the breaking out of another. Every thing under the *Moon* partakes of her *viciſſitudes*, augments and decreaſes only with this difference, that though their *wanes* be to as low a degree as hers, they never are perfectly at the full. There never was, nor never will be a State here compleatly happy: And as the *Philoſopher* handſomely reproacht the impatience of the *Perſian* King for the Death of his Wife, by undertaking to revive her, if he could help him but to the names of three men, that had never griev'd, to write upon her *Tomb*; ſo ſurely we may make the like offer to our malecontents, and engage to redeem all their uneaſineſſes, if they can point us out (I ſay not three, but) one age wherein there were no complaints. What then are our clamorous Repinings, but ſo many loud *in-*

vectives againſt God's *decree*; a Deſire to ſubvert his fundamental *Law*, and confound the diſtinction he has irreverſibly ſet between our *Earthly* and our *Heavenly* ſtate? And alas, What mad inſolence is this, to expect that the whole *Oeconomy* of the World muſt be chang'd only to humour us; That God muſt replant us a *Paradice*, pluck up every one of the Briers and Thorns which were our native curſe? Nay, bring down Heaven to us, and enſtate us in undiſturb'd unmix'd felicities? this is indeed ſimply conſidered a very wild expectation, but yet more ſo, when 'tis conſidered how we qualifie our ſelves for ſuch a priviledge: For let me ask, are we as eager to anticipate the holineſs as the happineſs of Heaven? Do we as paſſionately deſire to do *God's* will, as that God ſhould do ours? and emulate the *Angelical obedience* and purity, as much as *bliſs*? Theſe are Interrogatories which need no verbal Anſwer, our lives do too fully reſolve them in the negative; and then how ſhameleſs a partiality is it, thus to carve to our ſelves, and chuſe out of either ſtate what we beſt like, reſerve all the *ſenſualities* of this World, and yet cry out for the *impaſſibleneſs* of the next; but alas, theſe are pretenſions as inconſiſtent as they are bold, our *vices* having ſuch a native inſeparable adherency of *pain* and *vexation*, that 'tis not the moſt dexterous managery of a ſin that can ever ſever them, but if we will retain the one we muſt the other alſo: A Truth which might be exemplified to us throughout the whole *Catalogue* even of ſenſual ſins; but it is moſt eminently viſible in this of *murmuring*, which ſtays not as others do to take Pain at the *rebound*, and by way of reſult; but has it as its firſt *Element* and principle; it being it ſelf almoſt as great a pain, as any it can betray us to: And yet to ſecure an advance and *perpetuity* of Torment, every Event ſerves to foment and heighten it, and the moſt deſperate things are equally combuſtible to that *flame*. Indeed he that is poſſeſt with that humour, has a kind of fury within him, that will never let him reſt: And alas, What *Legions* of ſuch Evil Spirits are now among us? How are we as it were inſpir'd with *Mutiny*, it being the *univerſal dialect* of the Nation; and of many in it, who cannot be ſuppos'd to found it in any obſervation of their own, but are led by the *common genius*, and bellow rather by conſent with the reſt of the herd, than for any uneaſineſs, at leaſt of *injuſtice* and *oppreſſion* (for ſuch only give pretence for *Mutiny*) that themſelves feel. And ſince 'tis become a *Plebeian vice*, would God our Gentry would uſe it as they do their *faſhions*, and leave it off (if for no better reaſon) for its being vulgar: And indeed 'twere but equitable, that thoſe who have taken up ſo many ſins upon *punctilio*, ſhould for once lay down one upon the ſame ſcore. The *Athenian* State put down their *Oſtraciſm* (which otherwiſe they were fond enough of) becauſe it was debaſed, by happening to fall on *Hyperbolus*, a deſpicable and abject perſon: And there ſeems not much difference in the caſes, ſave only that we are more tenacious of *Sins* than they of Puniſhments; and I fear we ſhall ſo long retain this, till we find it its own *Lictor*, not only in the preſent uneaſineſs, but in that more fruitful harveſt of Miſchiefs, whereof it has now ſown the ſeeds. We ſee here what our thankfulneſs is, for theſe eminent miraculous mercies we have receiv'd, and the account of that is an unhappy ſpecimen, what we are like to find, when we ſurvey the uſes we have made of them, which God knows have been ſo unnatural and perverſe, as does too fully parallel the former inſtance.

The worſhip of God though but lately reſtor'd is yet already neglected by us

38. For firſt, If we reflect upon our *ſpiritual bleſſings*, what has the enjoyment of thoſe advantages produced, but the contempt of them? We have an eaſie free acceſs to God in his Sanctuary, our *Churches* are no

longer *Garriſons* to keep out the worſhip to which they were devoted, but like *hoſpitable doors*, are open to the regular piety of any that will enter. And now we have this liberty, now the *flaming ſword* is removed, we have loſt all appetite to the *Tree of life*, can willingly let thoſe *Everlaſting Gates* (as the *Pſalmiſt* ſtiles them) *Pſal.* 21. *ſtand* as everlaſtingly open, e're we enter them: And though the Fabricks are by God's Providence reſcued from their duſt and ruines, yet many of us endeavour to reduce them to a yet worſe deſolation, ſtrive to depopulate thoſe ſacred Manſions, and execute againſt them that *prophetick threat* concerning *Nineveh*, *Nahum* 1. *Leave them empty, void and waſte.* And indeed ſo they are, if not in an abſolute, yet in a comparative ſenſe; for could we at any time of *Divine Service* make an eſtimate of *all* the perſons that are abſent, 'twould ſcarce be diſcern'd that any are there; were all corners ranſackt, what a multitude of *Recuſants* ſhould we find upon a far differing account from that of Conſcience? Some we ſhould ſee ſtretching themſelves upon their beds, keeping a Sabbath indeed, but to their *ſloth*, not their *God*; others perhaps we may find rous'd from their Couches, upon the ſummons not of *Religion* but *vanity*; ſome new garment is to be fitted, ſome exotick dreſs eſſayed, and they who grudge *one hour* to the Preacher's glaſs, can ſpend many at their own; where they are ſo taken up with their *Idolatries* to themſelves, that they think of no other worſhip; nay, as the world goes, 'twere well this were the worſt diverſion, that ſome did not keep from Church, that they might in the interim, defile thoſe leſſer Temples of God they carry about them, and cut themſelves off from the Communion of *Chriſt's body*, to make themſelves *members of an Harlot*: Or that others were not *Bacchus* his Votaries when they ſhould be *God's*, ſpend that time in their frantick revels, and ſing a *Dithyrambick* inſtead of *Te Deum*. As for the *Mammeniſt*, if he keep an holy day, 'tis like the *Iſraelites*, to his *God's of Gold*, *Exod.* 32. 31. He is looking with veneration on his Idoliz'd Treaſure, numbring thoſe bags he dare not uſe, or perhaps with a more active Zeal purſuing the means of encreaſing them. Thus alas, may we go from one to another, and as it was in *Ezekiel's* Viſion, ſee ſtill greater abominations, *Ezek.* 8. And certainly that All-ſeeing Eye, which diſcerns what multitudes do thus buſie themſelves, at the times even of his ſolemneſt worſhip, can but adjudge us moſt profane deſpiſers of his mercy in reſtoring it: Yet would to God, 'twere only the *abſent* upon whom that ſentence would fall; but alas, the behaviour of many in the Church does too loudly teſtifie how little of devotion brings them thither, and at how mean a rate they value all that is done there: Thoſe Eyes which there ſhould wait on God, as thoſe *of a Servant on the hands of a Maſter*, *Pſal.* 123. 2. are rolling about to fetch in all the vanities and temptations which can occur to them, and look *every way*, but *towards Heaven*. Our Tongues, which ſhould be toucht with a Coal from the Altar, devoted wholly to Hymns and Prayers, are buſied in *private Colloquies* with thoſe about us: Buſineſs, News, nay, all the impertinent chat of our moſt vacant hours, is then taken up to entertain us; ſo that he who would know the *talk of the Town* or neighbourhood, need go neither to Exchange nor Market, the Church will as certainly ſupply him: And this ill employment of our Tongues, engages the like of our Ears, which when they ſhould be hearkening what the Lord God will ſay concerning us, are liſtening to thoſe *vain diſcourſes* we hold with one another; from all which outward indecencies we may too ſurely collect the inward irreverence of our heart. And is it poſſible that this ſhould now be the Temper of thoſe, who not long ſince ſeem'd to bewail their *excluſion* from thoſe ſacred Aſſemblies? Did we long for them as *David* for the *waters of Bethlehem,* when they appeared unattainable, and when they are brought to us, refuſe to taſte them, pour them out not as he did in devotion, but in *contempt?* 'Tis true indeed, in *temporal* Delights *poſſeſſion* uſually proves a nauſeating thing, and takes off our *appetite*; but it uſes not to be ſo in *ſpiritual*, whoſe peculiar property it is, not to ſatiate, but excite by fruition: But alas, though the Things we converſe with are *ſpiritual*, our hearts are carnal, and that is the cauſe why inſtead of crying out with the *Pſalmiſt, When ſhall I come to appear in the preſence of God, Pſal.* 42. We, like thoſe in *Malachy,* Chap. 1. 13. *Snuff at his ſervice, and ſay, What a wearineſs is it.?* A wearineſs indeed it appears in the literal ſenſe with many, who ſleep at it as men over-laboured, and ſcarce take ſo ſound repoſe in their own houſes as in God's; indeed ſuch is the variety of rude behaviour that is there us'd, that ſhould an *unbeliever* come into our Aſſemblies, he muſt ſurely (as *S. Paul* ſuppoſes in another caſe, 1 *Cor.* 14. 23.) ſay, *we are mad*; to ſee ſome gazing, ſome whiſpering, ſome laughing, others ſleeping, and perhaps the far fewer number praying, is ſuch a *medly,* as the moſt brutiſh *Idolaters* never admitted to their *worſhips*; and the way of Worſhipping *Mercury,* by throwing Stones, or *Hercules* by Curſing, is a ſober and decent kind of ſervice compared with this. And now alas, when will the *Church* recover its ancient Title, and become the *houſe of prayer?* 'Tis ſure according to the preſent appearance it may have many more proper names, that being the leaſt part of the buſineſs done in it: 'Tis true, there are ſome that make it a *Sanctuary,* but 'tis only againſt the penalties of the *Law,* or reproach of arrant *Atheiſm*; they come to ſave their money or their credit; others perhaps ſhun the ſolitarineſs of being at home, and come not as to a place of *Devotion,* but *Concourſe*; and 'tis to be doubted, ſome viſit that place as they do many others, becauſe they have nothing elſe to do. They want their week-days diverſion, and ſo are driven thither upon meer deſtitution of more grateful entertainments; make it a kind of *Sunday play-houſe*; ſit there as Spectators or Judges, to ſee the *company* or cenſure the *Preacher*, but never remember that themſelves have any other part to act; or are beheld by *Him,* who will not always be patient of ſuch profanation; but will, as the Scripture ſpeaks, *Repay them to their face, who thus contemn him in his.* We know among men, every one counts his Houſe his Fortreſs; and an Affront offered him there, doubles the Injury, and is not only a *contempt,* but an *invaſion*: And ſhall it not be a proportionable enhanſment with *God,* alſo, thus to defie him *within his own doors,* and approach his preſence in an impious bravery, the more fully to ſhew him, how little we regard him? At this rate, while we addreſs our ſelves, we may as ill manner'd Gueſts be *forbid his houſe*: Interrogated by God as the *Jews* were, *Iſa.* 1. *Why doſt thou tread my Courts?* A total abandoning of Worſhip being more fair and ingenuous than ſuch Devotion: Wherein like the barbarous Souldiers, we bring Chriſt a Scepter only to ſmite him on the head with it; and make a preface of *homage,* to give our ſelves the ſport of the *mockery*: Nay, 'tis ſadly to be feared, that God may *thruſt* us out of his Houſe, *ſhut* his Doors againſt us, *reſcue* his Service and himſelf from our profanation, and put us again under the ſame, (or a worſe interdict than that) which lately lay upon us.

The great ſin and danger of contemning God's holy worſhip.

39. Having now ſeen our ſcandalous Irreverence towards God's Worſhip in general, 'tis too eaſie to make Application to the ſeveral parts of it; every one of which muſt neceſſarily partake of the contempt which falls upon the whole, for while we bring no thoughts but ſecular with us; thoſe are

equally diſagreeing to all the *Divine* Offices: 'Twill be needleſs therefore to trace our wanderings in each of thoſe, ſince our whole **behaviour** in the Church is one great *deviation* from the buſineſs we ſhould come about: Yet that ſuperſedes not to every guilty perſon himſelf the neceſſity of a more diſtinct and particular reflection. 'Tis ſure at the *laſt dreadful Audit*, we muſt account for every of thoſe ſpiritual advantages we have abus'd; and alas, what a *diſmal reckoning* will many of us have then to give up, when our prayers, which we now turn into Sin, ſhall be turned into *perdition?* And we *who* would not ſupplicate our *God*, ſhall in vain invoke the *mountains and hills to hide us from the face of the Lamb*, when that Word which we now ſo faſtidiouſly deſpiſe, that it muſt be dreſt up in the colours of humane Rhetorick, to make us at all patient of it, and becomes then only tolerable to us, when it is fartheſt removed from being God's: When *that word*, as our *Saviour* ſpeaks, *ſhall judge us*, and that gracious *invitation to life* end in that fatal ſentence, *Go ye curſed.* Nay, when our very propitiation ſhall plead againſt us, and the crucified Body of our Saviour, which we have *in effigie* ſo often re-crucified in our unworthy approaches, or impious neglect of the holy *Euchariſt*, ſhall *witneſs* againſt us as its *murderers*, when we ſhall be found not *ſprinkled* as with blood of a *ſacrifice*, but *imbrued* as with that of *ſlaughter*: When all theſe means of our ſalvation, ſhall thus miſerably convert, and from the *ſavour of life*, become that *unto death*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. then we ſhall to our amazement find, how differing our eſtimates of them were from God's; and in his vengeance read the value he put upon them. What then have we now to do, but to anticipate our *dooms-day*, and *judge our ſelves, that we may not be judged of the Lord.* To make an impartial account of all theſe our profanations, and accuſe our ſelves before his *mercy-ſeat*, that ſo we prevent the arraignment at his *bar of judgement.* And as Offenders are uſually enjoyn'd to acknowledge their guilts in the very places where they committed them, ſo let us make the *Church* the Scene of our *penitence*, as we have of our *faults*. By our ſtrong crying and tears, deprecate our former indevotion, and by an exemplary Reverence, redreſs the ſcandal of our Profaneneſs. This, and only this, is the way to ſecure us againſt the *final* Vengeance of theſe ſins; nay, and againſt the *intermedial* alſo: For we are not to expect that ſo unkind abuſe of mercy ſhall be wholly reſpited to another world, it being ſo exaſperating a *crime*, as muſt in all probability awake God's *fury* and pull down preſent Judgments. I wiſh the Event do not too ſoon atteſt the reaſonableneſs of this ſuppoſal.

Our peace is abuſed to publick Profaneneſs and Impiety.

40. If from our *ſpiritual* Bleſſings, we now deſcend to our *temporal*, we ſhall not appear much better managers of thoſe; they being generally employed to purpoſes the moſt diſtant from thoſe, for which they were given. And firſt for our *peace*, that great comprehenſive enjoyment, upon which all others are dependent, and which is to our *civil* Capacities, the ſame that *health* is to our *natural*; the thing by which we reliſh and taſte the reſt of our comforts, we may from the Song of *Zachary*, *Luke* 1. learn for what intent God beſtows: *Deliverance from enemies* is to no other end, but that we may *ſerve God in holineſs and righteouſneſs all the days of our life*: But alas, he that obſerves how we employ our quiet, muſt ſurely ſay it ſerves little to the advancement either of Holineſs or Righteouſneſs: For the firſt of theſe we have already ſeen, how little of *holineſs* we ſhew even in that place where nothing elſe ſhould be admitted; and we are not ſo prepoſterouſly religious, to ſhew more in others. That *Piety* which is ſo cold and benumm'd under the warm breath of the *publick Ordinances*;

we may well preſume ſtark frozen, in our more retir'd offices: And if it thus faint and ſink in conſort, 'tis ſure more liable to the Wiſe man's *Væ ſoli,* and utterly dies when we are alone. 'Tis true indeed, theſe *Cloſet-tranſactions* are immediately viſible to none but the *ſearcher of hearts,* yet in true Devotion there is ſuch a *Symmetry* and proportion, that the Inferences we make by *analogie* may be very irrefragable: Nay, 'tis to be fear'd many lie open to a yet clearer *conviction,* and may be proved to have few or none of thoſe private intercourſes with Heaven; for though a negative be not ſimply evincible, yet as in civil caſes we prove a man not to have been at this time in ſuch a place, by his having actually been in another; ſo, were the whole Week, Month, perhaps Year, of ſome men exactly traced, we ſhould find them ſo engroſſed with other *diverſions,* that there will ſcarce be found any Minute for *devotion* to interpoſe: Men's worldly or fleſhly Concerns ſo divide their *time,* that God from whom 'tis all deriv'd, can be afforded no tribute out of it. Yet alas, 'twere well if this privative ſort of impiety were all we had to anſwer for: But 'tis too apparent we do not only *neglect* God, but *reproach* and violate him: What elſe are thoſe bold and inſolent *blaſphemies* wherewith we daily aſſault him, making him the mark at which all our wild Paſſions are ſhot. Do we want any thing either for our *uſe* or *delight?* Preſently *God* is accuſed, his *providence* or his *goodneſs* queſtioned: and he declaim'd againſt, either as impotent or illiberal. Does any body vex or diſquiet us? God muſt have his ſhare of our diſpleaſure, his ſacred name muſt be profaned, and we count our fierceſt *Revilings* of men, faint and inſignificant, if not inſpired with the moſt *dreadful* and *horrid Oaths;* Nay, he ſtands obnoxious to all the diſplacencies we receive even from inanimate creatures; if a *Die* or a *Card* run amiſs, our reſentments are preſently vented upon him; he is profaned and vilified, as if he were the *Cheat* that rookt us of our *money,* becauſe he does not ſecure us from thoſe loſſes, to which we wantonly expoſe our ſelves. Nor is it only our eager and warmer *paſſions* that thus invade him: Our pleaſanter *moods* do the very ſame, and we blaſpheme by way of divertiſement; every impertinent ſtory or inſipid *Jeſt,* muſt have the haut-gouſt of an Oath to *recommend* it, as every incredible Narration has to *atteſt* it: To ſay nothing of thoſe more ſolemn and deliberate *perjuries,* wherein we impiouſly ſuborn God's venerable and dreadful *name,* to be the Engine of our fraud and malice: And as if we thought he would forſwear as well as we, bring him to *countenance* thoſe Crimes he has vowed to *puniſh.* Thus do we with a prodigious impiety contaminate even Divinity it ſelf, make it the ſink for all our puddles to run into; and proſtitute that *name,* which, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, is *great, wonderful and holy,* to all the unholy *purpoſes,* our Paſſions, our Intereſts, or our Fancies can ſuggeſt to us.

41 This *profaneneſs* is ſo proper a foundation for *Atheiſm,* that we are not to wonder to ſee ſo many advance from the one to the other; they pay ſo little of the reverence due to God, that at laſt they turn their *impiety* into *argument,* and infer him not to be God, whom they treat ſo unlike one. And truly this ſeems to be the grand piece of *Logick,* which has diſputed many, not only out of *Chriſtian* but all *native* Religion. How unhappily ſucceſsful it has proved among us, is too apparent in thoſe impious diſcourſes which are every where heard, wherein men are arriv'd to ſuch a licentiouſneſs, that *David's Atheiſt* was a modeſt Puny, who only ſaid in his Heart, *There is no God,* and perhaps upon that account ſhall by ſome be adjudged to deſerve the Epithet the *Pſalmiſt* gives him, and be indeed thought

which commonly ends in downright Atheiſm.

thought a *fool*, that would not own what would now a-days ſo certainly denominate him a *Wit*, or in the ſolemn ſtile, a *Maſter of Reaſon*. And indeed they will atteſt the property of the ſtile, they rather *governing* Reaſon, than being *govern'd* by it; otherwiſe 'twould be hard to diſcern how from different *premiſſes* the ſame *concluſion* ſhould be induced: And thoſe who in the late adverſe times denied God in revenge of their ſufferings, ſhould now pay their gratitude alſo in the ſame manner, and renounce him as (or more) loudly, ſince his ſignal atteſtation of that *righteous cauſe*; his not owning whereof was then their *principal plea*. The truth is, 'tis a little ſtrange how Atheiſm could admit ſuch enhanſing acceſſions as we find it has; for it being the completion and higheſt ſtep of Ill, and that to which all others do but ſubordinately tend, one would think it ſhould from its firſt appearance in the world, have been ſo mature and full-grown a ſin, as could be capable of no improvement; but ſo ſubtilly wicked are theſe latter days, that we can never be brought to a *non ultra*, but ſtill find ſomething to add to the compleateſt ſin: Therefore though of thoſe that are really Atheiſts, one cannot be ſaid to be more ſo than another, yet ſome may be more daringly, and miſchievouſly ſo; and ſure in that reſpect our *modern* ſurmount all *former*: They were generally on the defenſive part, took up the *tenet* as a *buckler* againſt the unwelcome invaſions and checks of Conſcience, and deſign'd nothing but the more *peaceable enjoyments* of their *luſts*; but *now* men do not only uſe, but love it; make themſelves its avowed *Champions*, ſeek to win it *Proſelytes*; and in ſhort, appear ſo zealous for it, as if they made it their *religion* to have none. And God knows, too many ſuch reverſed kinds of *Evangeliſts* we now have, who with as great deſign unteach Divinity, as the firſt propugners taught it; and their *number* and *boldneſs* have ſo increas'd ſince the return of our *peace*, that ſure the next Age will have little cauſe to think *Religion* had any ſhare in the *Reſtoration*. Thus have we done our parts to ſuperſede that obligation of ſerving God in holineſs, by leaving no God to ſerve; and after the moſt ſignal atteſtation of his Deity in our reſcue, *we* do like thoſe *ingrate perſons*, who ſeek to ſubvert thoſe by whom themſelves were eſtabliſh'd, and *deny* him becauſe he has *own'd* us.

and is accompanied with fraud, injuſtice, and wrong-dealing.

42. This is the *holineſs* wherewith we have ſerv'd him, ſince our being deliver'd from the hands of our Enemies, and our *righteouſneſs* has been very proportionable; for if we look into the dealings of all ranks of men, we ſhall find the ſame vein of *deceit* run through all tranſactions. A few years ſince Sequeſtration and Plunderings, thoſe *whole-ſale robberies* had ſo over-topt the reſt, that like an *Epidemick diſeaſe*, they had overwhelm'd, if not the *kind*, yet at leaſt the *notice* of all other Injuſtices: But ſince thoſe *Leviathans* are withdrawn, the *leſſer Devourers* ſupply their place; Fraud ſucceeds to Violence; and in all places, all occaſions of commerce, we ſtill meet with Sequeſtrators. The adulterated wares and falſe meaſures in *Shops*; the dilatory proceedings, and evaſive tricks in *Law*; the various and unworthy Cheats of *Creditors*, and the mean and diſhoneſt advantages which are watcht in all ſorts of *Contracts*, are too irrefragable proofs hereof. Nay, not only our Buſineſs, but our very *recreations* expoſe us to theſe deceits, as ſome of our bankrupted Gameſters can too ſadly witneſs; what troops of *Harpies* attend thoſe ſports is every man's obſervation: 'Tis ſtrange ſo many ſhould yet be to learn the prudence to avoid ſo known a danger, wherein a man is at once made active and paſſive in the ſame Robbery, and does himſelf defraud his *family* of that, whereof he is defrauded by *another*. But amongſt theſe many injuſtices, there is none wherein Men

ſeem generally to find ſuch a gueſt and ſenſuality, as thoſe wherein God is concern'd; *twenty* Lay booties humour them not ſo much as *one* from the Clergy; and if the Quakers ſhould be muſtered according to that one Tenet of not paying Tithes, we ſhould indeed find their numbers formidable. How ſubtile even the rudeſt perſons are in defaulking thoſe dues, we ſee by every days experiment, the over-reaching their Miniſter being the grand Triumph of a Ruſtick's wit; ſo that not only their covetouſneſs, but their vanity is concern'd in it: I know 'tis the uſual *Apologie* for this kind of Sacrilege, that either the *maintenance* of the Clergy is too much, or their *merit* too little; for the firſt, I think it may be demonſtrated, That there is no *liberal Science*, and but few *Mechanick trades*, from which a man may not hope as plentiful a *ſubſiſtence*, as this affords to the generality of its *profeſſors*: However I ſhall leave thoſe that make this objection to diſpute it with that authority, which has allotted them this proportion; deſiring them to conſider, that whatever the ſupport of the Clergy is, it coſts them nothing; no man having purchaſt more, than what remains of the Eſtate, after his Tith is paid. As to the ſecond, I confeſs 'tis extremely to be wiſht, that the *negligence* and *vice* of Some did not give too much *pretence* to the Allegation; and to ſuch I cannot but apply the words of our *Saviour*, Matth. 18. 7. *Woe be to the man by whom the offence cometh*; yet certainly 'tis very incompetent, to juſtifie the detention of their *legal rights*: For till the Law which has aſſign'd them, delegate the Forfeiture to me, the greateſt *enormities* of my Paſtor, cannot entitle *me* to any thing that is *his*: And indeed what blame ſoever is really due to *ſome*, we muſt expect it ſhould extend to *all*, if the Accuſers were to have the benefit of the Mulct; and (as in the late confuſions) all Miniſters ſhould be made *ſcandalous* in order to the making them *poor*.

and with the defaming of our Neighbour, and endangering his life by frequent murders, and ſpecially in Duels.

43. 'Twere eaſier to draw up a far larger Catalogue of thoſe *injuſtices* we daily commit; for as man has divers other concerns beſides his goods, ſo he may be injured in all thoſe: And truly the iniquity of theſe days, ſeems fully commenſurate to all the ſuffering capacities of mankind: We *weigh* our own and others concerns in very *differing balances*, and *offer* thoſe injuries without any regret, which we can with no patience *ſuffer*: How nicely jealous is every one of us of his *own* Repute, and yet how maliciouſly Prodigal of *other men's*? ſo that Defamation is become one of our main *Topicks* of diſcourſe, furniſhes entertainment to all companies; the *preſent* owe their Divertiſement to the *abſent*, and many would be drain'd quite dry, were it not for this reſerve, which like an unexhauſtible ſpring, ſtill ſupplies freſh matter of talk. In like manner how carefully do we divert any hurt or mutilation of our *own Bodies*, and yet how barbarouſly inconſiderate are we of *others*, to whom we do the greateſt out-rages, rather than uſe any violence to our paſſion, or reſtrain an angry humour: Only I confeſs there is one Inſtance, wherein though we are *unjuſt*, we are not ſo *partial*, but expoſe our ſelves alſo; and that is in the caſe of *Duels*; a barbarous cuſtom, wherein 'tis hard to define, whether the Wickedneſs or Folly be greater; yet it maintains its way in ſpight of all the methods God has us'd to make us better or wiſer: of this there are too many, and too noted inſtances ſince our reſtoration, as if we were ſo enamour'd of *deſtruction*, that when we are prevented of it from our *Enemies*, we ſeek it from *one another*; or thought *publick Peace* ſo intolerable, that when 'tis caſt upon us (as ſure ours, if ever any may be ſaid to be) we are fain to take in private quarrels, as our reſcue from that dull quiet, and court the utmoſt *miſchiefs* to avoid the oppreſſion of the greateſt *happineſs*. Thus perverſely do we coun-

termine God's purpoſes of kindneſs; and when he has ſecur'd us, ſolicitouſly ſeek to be deliver'd from our ſafety; project new *dangers*, and dare his power with a yet harder Task, the *delivering us from our ſelves:* And whilſt we thus avert our quiet, 'tis no wonder that we produce no better effects of it; nor fructifie under that, which we will not permit our ſelves to enjoy.

Our plenty is abuſed to Exceſs and Intemperance.

44. And as upon this general view, we appear very ill managers of our Peace, ſo ſhall we much more, if we reflect on thoſe many particular bleſſings which are wrapt up in that, of which we make ſo perverſe uſe, that we therein no leſs violate *Sobriety,* than we have already appear'd to do *piety* and *righteouſneſs*; ſo filling up the meaſure of our Iniquity by tranſgreſſing all the fundamental rules of Chriſtianity, *living* neither *ſoberly, righteouſly, nor Godlily, in this preſent world, Tit.* 2. 12. And of thoſe *advantages* which are the appendages to Peace, there are two moſt eminent; *Plenty* and *Liberty*, both of which are the more remarkable in our preſent quiet, by how much the deprivation of each was the greater. For the firſt, we know the *late times of rapine*, had torn from among us their whole ſubſiſtence, ſo entirely deſpoil'd them that they were reduc'd to *Job's* condition, and connected the two extreme points of Birth and Death, by a middle ſtate of the like nakedneſs and deſtruction: And to ſuch our late *reſtoration* was a kind of Civil *reſurrection*; rais'd them like *Eliſha's* dry bones, from the moſt hopeleſs ſtate, and by a ſucceſſive poſſeſſion of their own *Inheritances,* made them *heirs to themſelves.* And though all were not ſo wholly diveſted, yet like thoſe *Canaanites,* whom the *Jews* did not extirpate, they were put under Tribute: And while perſons who knew ſo well how to exact, were *Lords Paramount,* a bare Being was all could be expected; they ſeem'd rather Stewards than owners of their *fortunes*, and had rather the Trouble, than advantage of their *Managery*: And who would not think, that this ſo long want of plenty ſhould have taught us ſobriety in the uſing it? That *deſuetude* ſhould have worn out the skill of *luxury* and we ſhould not have known how to be riotous: But alas, our memories have been too faithful to us in this particular; no one of our vanities is fallen into oblivion, but on the contrary the art of Voluptuouſneſs ſo improv'd, as if all the time that was loſt from the *Practick*, had been ſpent in the *Theory,* and we had for ſo many years been contriving new kinds and degrees of exceſs. Indeed it is too ſure, we retain'd the *affection,* when we had loſt the *power* of rioting; and 'tis not our proſperity ſeduces us, but we it. For as the *Sun* though it lends its rays to the begetting of the vileſt *Inſects,* yet makes no ſuch production but upon apt matter, *ſlime* and *putrefaction:* So neither would the moſt opulent fortune make us ſenſual, did it not find us diſpos'd and prepar'd for it. How forcible thoſe *propenſions* are, appears by the multitude of *objects* on which they work; For they had need be ſtrong Inclinations that take in all Opportunities, nay, poſſibilities of actuating themſelves, and ſuch 'tis evident ours are, there being nothing capable of miniſtring to luxury, which we uſe not to that purpoſe. Our *Meat* is no longer appointed to our Hunger, but our Taſts: So that the *Stomach* is made meerly paſſive in the matter of Eating; ſerves only to receive thoſe loads we charge it with, whileſt its Elections and Choices are foreſtall'd by the *palate* or *fancy*; nay, 'tis not permitted ſo much as a negative voice, not allowed to refuſe what is either for kind or quantity deſtructive to it: We do with ſtudied mixtures force our reluctiug appetites, and with all the Spells of *Epicuriſm,* conjure them up that we may have the pleaſure of laying them again. Thus un-

worthily *treacherous* are we to Nature, which while we pretend to *relieve*, we *oppreſs*, by giving her not only beyond her need, but ſufferance: And to ſhew we are no leſs dexterous in mixing *ſins* than *meats*, our very *Pride* (though in it ſelf an intellectual vice) mingles with our *Gluttony*; every thing is inſipid that is not coſtly; and it is thought an ignoble Peaſant-like thing to eat a plain meal: Nor is he now to be lookt on as a Gentleman, whoſe ſingle Ordinary coſts not as much as would be (and himſelf would perhaps ſome years ſince have thought) a fair exhibition for ſome whole Families. And that we may not be charg'd with *partial intemperance*, we go not leſs in that of drink; wherein we are ſo nice and critical, that 'tis become a ſpecial skill and faculty to *judge of liquors*: But how great ſoever our *curioſity* be, 'tis ſure our *exceſs* is greater, and does not only over-match but ſupplant it; there being no drink ſo unpleaſant, which the love of a debauch will not reconcile us to. So great a malice do we bear to our *reaſon*, that to oppreſs it, we are content to expoſe our darling, and do violence to our very *ſenſe*. How unhappily predominant this brutiſh Vice is, need not here be told, ſince it too evidently atteſts it ſelf to every man's obſervation, it no longer ſeeking the ſhelter of night and darkneſs, but impatient of ſuch delay, appears in the broadeſt light; and he is now a *ſlow-paced drunkard*, that has not finiſh'd his *courſe*, perhaps begun another before the *Sun* had ended his: Nay, ſo is the Scene chang'd, that *ſobriety* is become a reproachful thing; ſuch as even thoſe who value it dare not own, and are either driven to *preſerve* it by ſhifts and artifices, or elſe chuſe to *abandon* it rather than hazard the ſcandal. And certainly this is the great advantage this ſin has for the propagating it ſelf; for 'tis impoſſible *Beſtiality* ſhould be ſo univerſally agreeable to mankind, that all ſhould purſue it out of *appetite* and liking: 'Tis this Fear that engages many in it; and though it hath too many *voluntiers*, yet ſure 'tis this *preſs* that helps to make up its *numbers*; which as it ſpeaks the great baſeneſs of thoſe who are thus aſham'd both of Piety and Humanity, and had rather ceaſe to be *men*, than appear to be *Chriſtians*; ſo is it a ſad indication of National impiety, a fatal Symptom that we have near fill'd up the meaſure of our iniquities, and are ripened for the woes denounced againſt thoſe who *call evil good and good evil*, *Eſay* 5. 20. which ſure was never more palpably done than in this inſtance, wherein *temperance* is branded for *ill nature*, and dulneſs of humour; whilſt the moſt *ſwiniſh exceſs* muſt paſs for *ſociableneſs*, *friendſhip and hoſpitality*; names which have been ſo long proſtituted, that they have loſt their native uſe, and men have forgot thoſe very diſtant things to which they originally belong'd: Yet ſure ſuch once there were; God made us *ſociable creatures*, and we might ſtill continue ſo upon the ſtrength of that firſt principle, and need not owe our *intercourſe* to our *debaucheries*; no, nor our friendſhips neither, which have been ſo far from being preſerv'd that way, that there is nothing more obviouſly, and frequently violates them; nay, indeed the whole ſpecies of *real* friendſhips ſeems to be extinct, ſince this *fictitious* ſort took place. Men think it enough, (as indeed 'tis too much) to damn themſelves with their friends, and all other communications are tranſmuted into that of Sin; for we daily ſee thoſe, who cleave the moſt inſeparably in this kind to each other, will yet neither do, nor ſuffer any thing elſe: And ſure if this be *friendſhip*, 'tis ſuch a revers'd kind of it, as muſt have as prepoſterous a *Definition*; for none that have yet been given by *Divines* or *Philoſophers* will fit it. The like may be ſaid of *hoſpitality*, which ſure is in its proper nature of a very diſtant make from this; deſign'd to *relieve* Strangers, not *burthen* them; to cure their wants indeed, but not by the worſe exchange of a Surfeit: So that the *ancient* and the *modern* Hoſpitality differ as much as that of *Melchizedeck* from that of *Circe*: The one refreſhes, the other transforms: And how great a ſhew ſoever of liberality this latter may have, yet he is not to be thought to have drunk *gratis*, that has paid his *reaſon* for his *ſhot*.

to Luſt and Uncleanneſs.

45. And to both theſe parts of Intemperance, our Uncleanneſs bears full proportion; the one *makes proviſion for the fleſh*, and the other *fulfils the luſts thereof*. To how brutiſh an impudence this ſin is grown is too viſible: We need not trace men into their privacies and receſſes, themſelves willingly proclaim their guilts; nay, dread nothing ſo much as the opinion of being innocent: Yea, ſo out-dated a *vertue* is modeſty now become, that even that Sex, to which it was once accounted the greateſt ornament, have put it off, look on it as a piece of *Ruſticity*, and *country-breeding*: Whether this pulling down the fence be an Indication they are willing to lie *common*, I ſhall not determine: But ſure that very free and confident behaviour now in uſe, is too apt to invite aſſaults, and takes off all that Extenuation of crime which was wont to be allowed that Sex, upon the ſuppoſition of their being ſeduced? Thus do we publiſh our Sin as *Sodom*, and if we conſider how much boldneſs it has gain'd ſince the return of our *proſperity*; 'twill be probable that ours alſo has been fomented by *fulneſs of Bread, and abundance of Idleneſs, Ez.* 16. 49. That our Plenty is very ſubſervient to it, appears by the *vaſt expence* wherewith many men manage this vice: And that our Idleneſs is ſo too, is no leſs evident, by the *large portions of time* that are ſpent in thoſe purſuits, it being, as the great deſign, ſo the eſpecial buſineſs of too many mens lives. As for the *remedy* which God has aſſign'd, it ſerves now only to exaſperate the *diſeaſe*. Marriage with too many, only advances ſimple fornication to adultery, and ſuperadds perjury to uncleanneſs; thoſe ſacred bands are like *Sampſon's* Withs, broken upon every aſſault of the *Philiſtines*, and the very thought of being confin'd, makes men more apt to range: For alas, 'tis not their *needs*, but their *Fancies* they are to provide for, and that is ſo endleſs, that the greateſt liberty of *Polygamy* would never ſatisfie it: The ſame quarrel would lie then to multiplied Wives, which does now to ſingle; I mean that they were their own: And how numerous ſoever their *flock* were, 'twould not ſecure their poor Neighbour's only *Lamb*; eſpecially when 'tis conſider'd, that in this they gratifie two ſins at once, their *vanity* as well as their *luſt*; their complacence in *undermining* the Husband, being generally as great, as that in enjoying the Wife. And if *Pride* abſtractedly and in its own nature be as *Solomon* ſays, *an abomination to the Lord*, certainly when 'tis thus complicated, it muſt be infinitely more ſo, and aſcertain a concurrence of thoſe *Judgments* which are ſingly threatned to each of thoſe Sins? What thoſe are I wiſh guilty perſons would ſeriouſly ponder, and then they would ſurely think their momentany pleaſures much over-bought. But alas, ſuch a faſcinating ſin this is, as allows men no liberty of conſideration, they go on as the *wiſe man* ſays, *Prov.* 7. 22. with the ſame ſtupidity that an *Ox goeth to the ſlaughter*, or *a fool to the correction of the ſtocks*; and while every body elſe obſerves the effects of their Vice in their waſted *bodies*, and ruin'd *eſtates*; themſelves are the laſt that diſcern it, purſue the *courſe* till the very laſt remains of ſtrength and wealth are exhauſted, and nothing left them but *diſeaſe* and *beggary*. Of the truth of this, there have been too many ſad examples, though it ſeems not yet enough, to give caution to others.

46. And

and to Pride in Apparel, Furniture, and Equipage,

46. And to theſe *luſts of the fleſh* we ſpare not to add thoſe of the *eye* alſo; for ſo ſurely we may properly call all thoſe *Luxuries* which adapt themſelves peculiarly to that Faculty; ſuch are the *gaiety* of Apparel, *richneſs* of Furniture, and all the ſplendor of Equipage which has no propriety to any other ſenſe, but that of *ſeeing*, and is loſt if it be not lookt on: And though theſe ſeem to differ much from that *Covetouſneſs* which S. *John* is ſuppoſed to comprehend in that Phraſe, the one being the *tenacity*, the other the *profuſion* of Money; yet they are but ſeveral branches of the ſame Sin, and are diverſified only by a various application to the *Object*: For in ſtrict ſpeaking, he that covets Gold and Silver to lay on his *back*, is as properly *covetous*, as he that deſigns it only to fill his *Coffers*. But beſides the propriety theſe *exceſſes* have to that title, they have no leſs claim to that enſuing, *The Pride of Life*; it being evident that they are both effects and fomenters of Pride: And ſure this ſets but an ill Character upon them, that when the Apoſtle has divided all the *luſts* of the world into *three ſorts*, theſe bid ſo fair to *two* of them. I would not here be underſtood to condemn that Decency and moderate Expence, which agree to the ſeveral ranks and qualities of Perſons, there being not only a *lawfulneſs*, but ſome kind of *civil neceſſity* for ſuch Diſtinctions: nor is the levelling principle fitter to be admitted in Habit, than in Title or Eſtate: That which I accuſe is quite another thing, it being that inordinate profuſion, which does not only exceed the ability and fortune of the Perſon, but the proportion of his rank and condition; and ſo confounds that diſtinction it ſhould preſerve, and levels us the wrong way: It being more tolerable that all ſhould be *Peaſants*, than all *Lords*. And this is the irregularity that many ſeem to affect, there being not only an emulation of pomp and bravery among equals, but thoſe of the moſt diſtant qualities, there ſeeming now no other *meaſure* than the utmoſt extent of their *money* or *credit*; the latter whereof is often ſo ſtretcht, that it not only cracks it ſelf, but by an unhappy contagion, breaks thoſe it deals with, and like a *Granado*, tears Towns in pieces: The many ruin'd Families of *Tradeſmen* do too ſadly atteſt this: Would God our *Gallants* would conſider how unequal it is, that many ſhould want *neceſſary cloathing*, only to maintain the *ſuperfluity* of theirs; an Injuſtice which not only upon a *religious*, but *politick* account deſerves the ſevereſt Reproof; and ſince *Divine* Laws will not reſtrain it, 'twere well if *Humane* were provided: Though I confeſs, 'twere not eaſie to find out penalties to deter thoſe, whom the wants ſo uſually attending theſe exceſſes will not diſcourage. This ſort of *vanity* was once thought peculiar to *women*; and though I cannot ſay that the ſexes have exchang'd faults, (becauſe each ſtill keeps its own, together with thoſe of the other) yet 'tis evident they have communicated them; and as the *Women* of this Age have tranſcrib'd *Maſculine* Vices, ſo the *Men* have *Feminine*; this particularly, wherein they ſeem fully to anſwer the Copy, they being as Critically knowing in all the myſteries of vanity, and as diligent in reducing their *ſpeculations* to *practice*, as any the moſt extravagant-Female. Indeed both the one and the other purſue this *folly* with ſo great an expence of Care, Time and Money, as if to be fine and happy were the ſame thing, and their *bodies* had been deſign'd for their Cloaths, rather than their *cloaths* for their Bodies.

which hath occaſion'd the ruine of many Families and great Eſtates.

47. And now when all theſe luxuries are to be ſerv'd, it had need be an exorbitant plenty that ſhall ſupply them; and that will unfold the riddle ſo frequent among us, of ſo many being poorer ſince they recovered their eſtates, than when they wanted them: Our *revenue* how large ſoever, is

ſo clogg'd and incumber'd with our *vices*, that they moulder away, and only ſerve to carry other men's with them, by giving credit to run in debt. There are indeed no ſuch unmerciful *exactors* as our own Luſts; the one gleans after the other, till they induce ſuch a ſcarcity, as the Prophet *Joel* deſcribes, 1. 4. *That which the Palmer-worm hath left, hath the Locuſt eaten, and that which the Locuſt hath left, hath the Canker-worm eaten, and that which the Canker-worm hath left, hath the Caterpillar eaten*: So that in effect, we have only changed our oppreſſors, and are as much or more exhauſted by our own ſins, as we were before by other men's; with this woful circumſtance that now we have the *guilts* as well as the *ſufferings*: Thus do we rob our ſelves, and create *want* in the midſt of all that *abundance* God has given us, uſing our plenty as the *Benjamites* did the *Levites* Concubine, *Judg.* 19. force and proſtitute it, till we deſtroy it; and the ſimilitude holds in this alſo, that what we thus violate is not our own; for let us fancy what we will, certainly our *ſuperfluities* are more the *poors* Right than *ours*, aſſign'd to them by God the grand Proprietor. So that our Exceſſes have, beſides their proper *guilt*, that of *injuſtice* ſuperadded; and when the cry of the *poor* ſhall be joined to thoſe of our riots, they will certainly be too clamorous to let vengeance any longer ſleep.

Our liberty is abuſed to the breach of the Laws, and contempt of the Government,

48. This is the account we can give of our *plenty*, and that of our *liberty* is not much better; 'tis not long ſince that *arbitrary tyranny* expir'd, which gave us no other *meaſures* of our duties or puniſhments, than the *will* or *avarice* of the Impoſers: And then how did we gaſp to be under the conduct and production of *known determinate Laws*? Yet now we have them, who conſiders them, or is regulated by them? Between the *licentiouſneſs* of Inferiors, and the *remiſneſs* of Superiors, they are rendred things only of *form*, not *uſe*; for while the one violates and the other connives, what can they ſignifie? And though there be never ſo many *new* Laws made to aſſert the *old*, yet we ſee they ſerve for little but to partake of the ſame contempt with the others, and are but like the *Chimera's* of an *Utopian State* ſagely contriv'd, but to no purpoſe. 'Tis the execution of Laws that gives them a real and effective being, and without that, amidſt our great volumes we are yet deſtitute, and may too probably experiment the truth of that *Axiome*, that *'tis better to live where nothing is lawful, than where all things are.* Indeed if we remember how the Statutes of *Omri* were kept, with what a tameneſs the ſevereſt Impoſitions of the *late Uſurpers* were ſubmitted to, we have reaſon to think, *coercion* is the ſureſt Principle of *vulgar obedience*; though withal it ſets but an ill mark upon us, who know ſo much better how to be *ſlaves*, than *ſubjects*. And as we are reſtor'd to our *civil liberty*, ſo as a branch or conſequent of that, we are to our *perſonal* alſo: We are lately in the condition Chriſt foretold to St. *Peter*, carried by others whither we would not, *John* 21. 18. but now we gird our ſelves and go whither we will; and alas, What uſe do many of us make of this *freedom*? Is it not viſible, that neither our publick nor private affairs are the better attended? But on the contrary we are in a reſtleſs purſuit of impertinent or vicious *paſtimes*, go pilgrimages to our *pleaſures*, wander about from this ſport, that Meeting to another, till many of us forget we have any other concerns in the world, and are as much ſtrangers to our own homes, as when we were forcibly detain'd thence: And for ſuch I know not whether the former reſtraint be not eligible, to be a *priſoner* being a kind of reſcue to him, that would otherwiſe be a *vagrant*.

which is an argument of horrible ingratitude and diſingenuity.

49. Theſe are the *uſes* we make of thoſe *advantages* whereof God has repoſſeſt us. I know 'tis too envious a task to diſtribute theſe accuſations to

every Rank and Order of Men among us; I have here given them in the lump, and wiſh that not only ſuch *degrees*, but each *perſon* would adapt to himſelf his *peculiar ſhare*, wherein contrary to other *dividends*, I fear the only Immodeſty and Injuſtice too will generally be, for every one not to carve liberally for himſelf. However, 'tis ſure in the groſs they make up the *Character* of a moſt barbarouſly *ungrateful Nation*. God was pleaſed to return our *peace*, before we had forſaken our *ſins*, as if he meant to try our ingenuity; that we who had been ſo much worſe than beaſts under the former method, that no ſtripes would diſcipline us, might have this advantage to redeem our credit, and be drawn with theſe cords of a Man: But we have put off not only *piety* but *humanity*, and are equally untractable to all methods. And now who can refrain from *Moſes*'s *paſſionate Apoſtrophe. Do ye thus requite the Lord O fooliſh people and unwiſe! Deut.*32. 6. Unwiſe indeed, that from the moſt benign *purpoſes* of God, extract nothing but our own *miſchief*: Are the poorer for his Liberalities, and the worſe for his Goodneſs; by a prepoſterous uſe ſo wear out our Bleſſings, that they ceaſe to be, at leaſt to be *Bleſſings*: And if they once fall from that, there is no middle form for them to aſſume; they convert into the direct contrary, and become the fatalleſt *Curſes*, more heavy than thoſe which were originally deſign'd as ſuch; That degeneration adding malignity, and no *Fury* being ſo extreme, as that which bottoms upon repell'd and *irritated Love*. God's *mercies* are like thoſe *pictures*, which according to the different poſition of the beholder, carry different Repreſentations; if we will ſtill ſtand on the wrong ſide, and not take them in their more *amiable* appearance, we ſhall find they can put on a *dreadful*: His Goodneſs will not be finally unoperative; if we will not permit it to lead us to *repentance*, 'twill drive us to *deſtruction*. I am ſure we have all reaſon to expect he ſhould exert his power as eminently againſt us, as he has done for us; unleſs perhaps he ſees that is not neceſſary to our ruine; for indeed let him but ſtand by and not interpoſe his Omnipotence for us, he may truſt us to be his *Executioners*, our Vices having a *natural* as well as *moral* Efficacy to deſtroy us. And who knows whether that be not the reaſon of his ſeeming connivence, that he forbears to ſtrike us, to give us up to thoſe more fatal wounds we inflict on our ſelves; this alas, we have too much cauſe to fear, for 'tis ſure, 'tis not our *innocence* that gives us Impunity, but 'tis more than probable 'tis our *incorrigibleneſs*; that God gives us over with a *why ſhould ye be ſmitten any more?* Will not proſtitute his Judgments; but as the baſeſt of *Malefactors* leave us to the baſeſt of *Executioners*, and let our iniquities become our ruine. This as it is the ſevereſt purpoſe God can entertain towards us, ſo 'tis our moſt important concern to avert. And, O that we, who have ſo perverſly reſiſted all the deſigns of his *love*, would now try to defeat that of his *anger*, rob him of thoſe inteſtine avengers within our own breaſts, thoſe *fleſhly luſts which fight againſt the Soul*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 10. which do not only provoke, but execute his Wrath, and make us more miſerable than *Hell* it ſelf could do without them; and God knows 'tis more than time for us to ſeek an eſcape from ſo *formidable miſchiefs*: O let us not contract one minutes delay, let us caſt our ſelves at the feet of our offended God, and as thoſe who are condemn'd to diſgraceful Executions, uſe to petition for ſome death of leſs Infamy, as a *boon*, and *favour*; ſo let us beg, that he will pleaſe to think us worth his *own correction*; that whatſoever we ſuffer from his hand, yet that we may not (like *Herod*) be deliver'd up to the loathſome fortune of being devour'd by our own putrefaction. In a word, let us form *David*'s *choice* into an importunate *prayer*, and earneſtly beg that we may *fall into the hands of God,and not into the hands of men*, at leaſt not of *our ſelves*, who are more to be dreaded than all our other *Enemies*.

God will call us one day to an account for all theſe things.

50. Indeed till we do thus, our proſperities are far from real, and do in this juſtifie our moſt mutinous repinings, that we are never the better for them, nay, much the worſe; yet ſince 'tis only we that have enervated them, they will ſtand upon our account in their proper weight and value: When our *receipts* are ſummed up, God will charge us with them, not as thoſe empty *uſeleſs things* we have made them, but as thoſe great and *ſolid bleſſings* he intended them. And certainly this is moſt deplorable ill managery, to reſerve nothing to our ſelves but the *burthen* and *account* of our good things; to enjoy nothing, and yet be anſwerable for all. In ſecular things men uſually pay with ſome regret for thoſe things, of which they have only anticipated the *uſe*: But with what diſmal reluctances ſhall we come to pay for theſe, of which we have made no *advantage*? And muſt therefore pay the dearer becauſe we have not; it being not ſo much the things, as our employing of them to our benefit,whereof God will exact account. His *anger* is then only incens'd, when we reſiſt his *love*: And his only quarrel to us is,for fruſtrating his deſign of making us happy. And ſure thoſe well deſerve his wrath, that will provoke it on ſuch terms; yet ſo perverſe is the *choice*, as of all ſinners in general, ſo eſpecially of *this Nation* at this time, who have all before us which might make us happy in both worlds, if we did not madly affect to be ſo in neither. God grant we may recover the Sobriety to make *wiſer elections*, before it be out of our power to make any,and we be found to ſtand to the miſchiefs of our own wild Option.

51. The Reader will perhaps think I have gone beyond the limits of a moderate digreſſion; but the too great *copiouſneſs* of the Theme, muſt be my *excuſe*: Such over-grown Vices cannot well be drawn in little; and where there is ſuch a multitude,the moſt ſuperficial view of each, is rather proportionable to a *diſtinct Tract*,than to the *few Pages* it has borrowed in this. My greater fear is, that the event may prove it impertinent, there being not much hope that a *private whiſper* ſhall be heard by thoſe,who are deaf to the *loudeſt calls* of Heaven, and have made no other *uſe* of thoſe various and ſignal Providences we have been under, than to defeat the *deſign* of them.

CHAP. IX.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Diſputes in general.

Chriſtian Religion much injur'd by our over eager diſputes and contentions about it,

1. THeſe are ſome of thoſe many artifices, whereby Satan like a cunning *Picklock*, ſlily robs us of our grand *treaſure*, the power and efficacy of our Chriſtianity,and leaves us only the empty *Casket*, the name and formal Profeſſion; that which ſerves only to make us *proud*, not *rich*; *confident*, not *ſafe*: And God knows, ſo many are daily thus befool'd by him, ſo many fall as preys to theſe his *Stratagems*, as might, one would think, glut the eagereſt malice, and ſuperſede all farther deſigns: But ſo inſatiate is this grand Devourer, that *retail prizes*, though never ſo frequent, do rather enrage than ſatisfie his *appetite*: He is Enemy not only to this or that man, but to *mankind* in groſs, and therefore as if he fear'd that even his malice might not prove indefatigable enough for ſo many diſtinct purſuits, he contrives more compendious methods of deſtruction; frames ſuch *Engines* as to take off whole ranks, nay troops; compounds ſuch active *Poiſon*, as like a Peſtilence, kills multitudes

at once. It is too trivial a Miſchief to annoy the *outward parts*, it is his Maſtery to ſpread an unſeen venome in the *Bowels*, thence to diffuſe it ſelf throughout, mix with the vital ſpirit, and convert that *kindly heat* which ſhould animate, into thoſe wild *irregular flames* which ravine and conſume. And this is done by that Peſtilential Spirit of *diviſion*, that heat of *diſputation*, which has for ſo many Ages poſſeſt and waſted the *Catholick Church*; and by an unhappy kind of Magick transform'd the zeal of Chriſtian *practice* into an itch of unchriſtian *Diſpute*; made the *queſtions* about our *Creed* more numerous than the *letters* of it; and by multitudes and contrariety of *Paraphraſes* ſo confounded and obſcur'd the *Text*, that what was anciently the badge and *teſſera* of Chriſtian Communion, ſerves us for no other purpoſe, but as an occaſion of breaking it.

2. So long as the Church retain'd the *ſimplicity* of Chriſtian Doctrine, lookt on her *faith* as the Foundation of her *obedience*, and endeavour'd to propagate to her Children ſuch an underſtanding of the one, as was moſt apt to promote the other; She happily made good the title *Chriſt* gives her, *Cant. 6.* of his *Love*, his *Dove*, his *Vndefil'd* one; but when the *Serpent* had once got into this Paradiſe, infus'd his *ſubtilties*, and nice intricacies into Men's brains; and leſt that ſhould not be ruinous enough, his *venome* alſo into their hearts: Then began all thoſe unhappy *Metamorphoſes*, in compariſon of which, thoſe of the Poets are as *trivial* as they are *fabulous*: Then that *faith* which was once inſeparably joyn'd with the *patience* of the Saints, forſook that tame company, and linkt it ſelf with the moſt contrary qualities of *wrath* and *bitterneſs*; and thoſe whoſe Profeſſion it was to *reſiſt* unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin, *purſued* to blood thoſe that reſiſted them in any of their ſpeculations: Then that paſſive valour which had rendred them ſo venerable to their Heathen Enemies, converted ſome, tired out others, and amaz'd all; ſadly degenerated into that active malice which from *perſecuted Chriſtians*, entitle them to that monſtrous ſtile of *Chriſtian perſecutors*. And that *ardent love*, which had offered up ſo many Holocauſts to God, was ſupplanted by that *fiery hatred*, that made no leſs acceptable oblations to Satan.

which have turn'd the Ancient ſimplicity of Chriſtians into wrath and bitterneſs towards one another.

6. This miſerable and deſtructive *change* was ſo much the intereſt of the Enemy of Souls, that we cannot wonder he ſhould ſo ſtudiouſly promote it; and indeed never did he at once ſo approve his *malice* and *ſubtilty*, I would I could not ſay ſucceſs alſo, as in this *deſign*; in compariſon whereof, all his other Projects ſpeak him but a Puny; this is his one *Goliah ſtratagem*, which has ſerv'd him not only to *defie*, but even *defeat the Armies of the living God.*

The Devil at firſt raiſed up Hereſies to diſturb the Peace, and break the Vnity of the Church;

4. Nor is his Sagacity more obſervable in the *choice*, and main drift of the Deſign, than in the *ways* of Effecting it; had he brought into the *Primitive* Church thoſe large ſcrolls of diſputable points, wherewith he has filled the Modern; that more charitable Age muſt needs have ſtartled and diſcern'd, That that *ſeeming jealouſie* for Truth, was indeed nothing but a *real deſign* againſt Peace; and would ſurely never have parted with that ſacred *depoſitum*, that precious legacy ſo lately bequeath'd by Chriſt, for thoſe vain janglings, thoſe School-ſubtilties which now entertain the world. But as he that would divert a Man from the guard of ſome important Treaſure, alarms him in ſome other of his greateſt *intereſts*; ſo he at firſt raiſes up *Hereſies* of the greateſt magnitude, whoſe blaſphemous conſequences ſo ſhook the whole Fabrick of Religion, that what was *Vzzah's* Raſhneſs, ſeem'd then every Man's adviſed Duty, to *put his hand to the upholding of the tottering Ark.* How could thoſe who had been baptiz'd into

the faith of the Bleſſed Trinity, ſuffer the *Arians* to rob them of the Second Perſon, the *Macedonians* of the Third, the *Valentinians* and *Manichees* ſo to deſpiſe the Firſt, as to ſet up againſt him a Rival principle of Being? How could thoſe who had ſo ſolemnly renounc'd the World, the Fleſh and the Devil, ſee them all bowed to by the temporizing, unclean, idolatrous *Gnoſticks*? Theſe were ſuch invaſions as ſeemed to commiſſionate all that could wield the ſword of the Spirit to take it up and engage in this Warfare. But all this while 'twas a ſad *Dilemma* to which the Church was driven; if ſhe gave countenance to theſe *ſeducers*, ſhe betrayed her *faith*: if ſhe entred the *conteſt*, ſhe violated her *unity*; the one would undermine her *foundation*, the other would make a breach in her *walls*.

and hath occaſion'd a great deal of quarrel and contention in (or about) leſſer matters,

5. And the Devil was too old an Artiſt to loſe the *advantage*; he knew well, that even a juſt and neceſſary *defence* does, by giving men acquaintance with War, take off ſomewhat from the abhorrence of it, and inſenſibly diſpoſe them to farther *Hoſtilities*; and therefore he fail'd not to provide *ſparks* for that matter, which was now grown ſo combuſtible; nor did he always ſend them from the *bottomleſs pit*, but ſometimes borrowed fire from the *Altar* to conſume the Votaries, and by the mutual colliſion of well-meant *zeal*, ſet even Orthodox Chriſtians in a *flame*. A memorable inſtance of this was the *diſpute about Eaſter*; wherein while the veneration they had of the glorious Reſurrection of *Chriſt*, prompted them to commemorate it in the exacteſt manner they could, the *Serpent* creeps into this Paradiſe, and though they had the ſame common end, yet on occaſion of ſome little diſſenting in the way, the heat of *devotion* inſenſibly degenerated into that of *contention*; and by being very tenacious of a circumſtance of that *celebration*, they loſt the more eſſential requiſite, that of *Charity*; kept the Feaſt indeed, but with the leaven of malice, and abſurdly commemorate the redintegration of his *Natural* Body, by mutilating and dividing his *Myſtical*. So likewiſe in the buſineſs of Rebaptization, while one ſide in a pious abhorrence of *Hereſie*, thought the ſtain like that of Original Sin, could not be done away by any Purgation leſs ſolemn than that of Baptiſm, and the other in a juſt reverence of ancient *cuſtom*, and jealouſie of *innovation* oppoſed it; the Diſpute laſted till the Scene was changed, and thoſe who deliberated of the manner of *receiving* Hereticks into the Church, were themſelves as ſuch *turn'd* out of it. No leſs well meant were the *Originals* of the *Novatian* and *Donatiſt* Hereſies, and as equally unhappy were their *iſſues*: For in them all, when bitter *Zeal* was once fermented, through its aptitude to receive, and the Devil's vigilance to adminiſter occaſions, the *Orthodoxy* or Hereſie of lives ſoon became terms out-dated, and men were meaſur'd only by *opinions*: That *ſword of the ſpirit* which was at firſt deſign'd againſt vicious practices, had its edge turn'd againſt *ſpeculative* notions; in ſo much, that at laſt like that of *Joab*, 2 *Sam.* 20. 8. It had got ſuch an aptneſs to fall out, that it was always a ready inſtrument of Execution, till even a Philoſophical point, as that of the *Antipodes*, was reſolv'd with an *Anathema*; and not to know the Syſtem of this *preſent* World, made forfeiture of that *to come*.

which that wicked one hath improv'd into innumerable Sects and Schiſms, which ſwarm in the Church.

6. But alas theſe, though great defections from Primitive Unity, were but modeſt eſſays, and feeble aſſaults, compar'd with thoſe which infeſted the ſucceeding Ages: This *root of bitterneſs* was then but a *probationer* in the ſoil, and though it ſent forth ſome off-ſets to preſerve its kind; yet *Satan* was fain to be at ſome pains to cheriſh and nurſe them up, placed them under the ſhadow of the *Sanctuary*, and got them like the treacherous Ivy, ſupported by that *piety* they were deſigned to deſtroy; but it was not long

ere they had got firmer rooting and ſtrength, not only to propagate, but multiply. Every Diſpute in Religion grew *proliſical*, and in ventilating one queſtion, many new ones were ſtarted: And as *queſtions* grew numerous, ſo did *Sects* too; every Opinion almoſt conſtituted a new party, and thoſe again ſubdivided into many others; ſo that of all the firſt Violators of Primitive Unity, we ſcarce find any, who did not revenge their *Schiſm* upon themſelves, by ſeparating one from another, as they had all done from the *Church*; till at laſt the progeny both of Sects and Opinions grew ſo numerous, that he who would exact an account, muſt be ſent like *Abraham*, to the Sky or to the Shore; the Stars or Sands being as apt a ſubject of *Arithmetick* as they. Whence it is brought to paſs, that *Satan* now may leave his toilſom labour of compaſſing the Earth; Men do his buſineſs for him, giving him leiſure to be only a Chearful *Spectator* of their *Divinity-prizes*; the bloody combates of *Eccleſiaſtick Gladiators*.

7. And that he may be ſecur'd never to want that pleaſing divertiſement, the *later Ages* have been carful to train him up *Combatants*, it being now become a diſtinct ſort of Learning, a new Species of Divinity, to raiſe nice *queſtions*, create new *difficulties*, branch out with fond *diſtinctions* our holy Faith, which the pious Simplicity of the firſt Chriſtians receiv'd to practice; not to read upon as an *Anatomy*, unbowel and diſſect to try experiments, much leſs to bring into the *Theatre*, there made to fight and bleed, to ſhew Men ſport, and try the skill of the unhappy Sword-men, the Maſters of defence. *The form of ſound words*, which in its native frame and conſtitution was moſt enlivening and ſalubrious, diſſolv'd and melted by *Chymical preparation*, ceaſes to be nutritive; and after all the labours of the *Alembeck*, and hopes of an *Elixir*, inſenſibly evaporates, and vaniſhes to Air; or leaves in the recipient a foul *Empyreuma*, or fretting corroſive. An endleſs dotage about names and words, and then as endleſs a quarrel for them, appearing the commenſurate *effect* of the long ſtudies of thoſe *Diſtillers* in Divinity, who boaſt its Sublimation.

Our Diſputes are now become a particular Art or Science in the Schools,

8. It is indeed a thing worthy of the greateſt both wonder and lamentation, to ſee how the plaineſt, and moſt *ſimple propoſition*, when it falls into the hands of theſe *Artiſts*, is mangled and diſjoynted, is rarified, exalted and refin'd: He whoſe leiſure, or indeed whoſe life, would ſerve him to ſurvey all the ſubtil Diviſions and Diſtinctions of the *School-men*, would ſure reſolve, they had the power of working *Miracles*; *Queſtions* in their hands multiplying in the breaking, like the *loaves* in our *Saviour*'s. But ſure the event of the Miracles are very diſparate, no ſolid nouriſhment being deriv'd by the one, but on the contrary, Stones given us inſtead of Bread, and thoſe too for the worſt purpoſes, even to fling at one another, as if becauſe *ſtoning* was the death of the firſt Chriſtian *Martyr*, we deſign'd his *Charity* to the ſame fate with himſelf; that *Divine Goſpel Grace* having ſince fall'n under as thick a ſhowre, and with this ſharp aggravation too, that whereas he ſuffered from *Jews*, *Chriſtians* are become its *Executioners*: Whilſt thoſe who pretend to be *Champions* of the Faith, Irrefragable, Angelical, and Seraphical *Doctors*, not only fill the Church with quarrels whilſt they live, but bequeath them in their writings to poſterity; as *Ziſca* is ſaid to have done his Skin, to be made an Incentive to war and confuſion.

whoſe too curious and ſubtle diſtinctions have promoted contention to the loſs of mutual love and charity.

9. It was the policy of *Julian* to ſhut up the Fountains of humane learning from the Chriſtian Youth, leſt they ſhould there gain ſuch acuteneſs, as might render them the more formidable Adverſaries to *Paganiſm*: But could he have foreſeen that they would have employed thoſe Weapons not againſt

The plainneſs and ſimplicity of the Chriſtian Religion is perplexed and confounded with Philoſophical niceties.

againſt the *common Enemy*, but *one another*, he would ſurely have revers'd the Stratagem, freely open'd thoſe *Magazines* whence they might furniſh themſelves for their mutual ruine, and have as ſolicitouſly *promoted* their Learning, as ever he *obſtructed* it. I am very far from abetting their arrogant folly, who either decry humane Learning in general, or make it ſuch a *Moabite*, or *Ammonite*, that however it be admitted in *civil Converſe*, muſt be interdicted the *Sanctuary*. Our Religion preſcribes us rational not brutiſh Sacrifices, and therefore deſpiſes not any of thoſe *advantages* which may improve our reaſon, exalt the *man*, and depreſs the *beaſt* in us: Yet ſure we ſhall derogate very impiouſly from Chriſt's prophetick office, if we allow not Divinity to be the Supreme and nobleſt Science; ſuch as is to be ſerv'd and attended, not regulated and govern'd by thoſe inferiour: But that juſt order ſeems now to be inverted; *divine* learning is brought down to *humane*; the *Simplicity* of Chriſtian Doctrine ſo perplext and confounded with *Philoſophical niceties*, that *Plato* and *Ariſtotle* are become the Umpires of our Religion, and we muſt go ask *Heathens* how far we ſhall be *Chriſtians*. Thoſe *deep things of God*, as the *Apoſtle* calls them, 1 *Cor.* 2.10. and of which he pronounces the natural Man an incompetent Judge, are yet brought before *that Tribunal*, ſubjected to be ſcann'd by rules of Art: But alas, our line is too ſhort to ſound thoſe Depths. Men raſhly undertake to underſtand *incomprehenſible*, to order *infinite*, define *ineffable* things: And then no wonder if their conceptions differ; for where there is no viſible truth, wherein to Center, *error* is as wide as men's *Fancies*, and may wander to Eternity: While multitudes run careers in the dark, it is not ſtrange to have them juſtle, and overthrow each other.

We ſhould be more careful to practiſe the plain Truths of the Goſpel, than curiouſly enquire into the Myſteries thereof.

10. And doubtleſs were the *Controverſies* which have ſo long haraſſed the Church throughly examin'd, many of them would be found of this nature. An *humble belief* has been judg'd too ſluggiſh and dull an exerciſe for men of acute parts, and therefore they would not take *Faith's word* that ſo it is, unleſs *reaſon* will be her *ſurety*, and ſhew them how; but ſure it had been much for the *peace* of the Church and *ſafety* of Souls, if Myſteries had been permitted to be *Myſteries*; that thoſe ſublimer parts of our *Faith* had been entertain'd with more veneration, and leſs of *diſquiſition*, and that while even the learned'ſt do acknowledge them to be *Abyſſes*, they would not confute that confeſſion, by attempting to *fathom* them. But alas, ſo prepoſterous has been the procedure, that thoſe things which were indeed inexplicable, have been rackt and tortur'd to diſcover themſelves, while in the mean time, the plainer, and more acceſſible *truths*, as if deſpicable while eaſie, are clouded and obſcur'd; ſo many ſubtle *queries* rais'd about them, that the *Theorick* of Chriſtianity is become harder than the *Practick*; a Grace is much more readily acquir'd, than defin'd, and that *key of knowledge* which ſhould give us entrance into the cloſets and receſſes of Religion, is by ſo much tampering and wrenching made *uſeleſs*; ſerves only to buſie us at the door, and ſo in effect proves rather a *bar to keep us out*, than a *key to let us in*. Thus perverſe are the *contradictions* of humane deprav'd nature; which like our *firſt Parents* take it unkindly, that God has reſerv'd any thing from us, and boldly attempt to break down his *encloſures*, to rob him of his *peculiar*; and yet in the mean time, as induſtriouſly contrive to rob our ſelves of our own, by cancelling both parts of God's diſtribution, neither leaving *ſecret things to the Lord our God*, nor *the revealed ones to us and our children, Deut.* 29. 29. Certainly the firſt propagators of our Faith, proceeded at another rate; they well knew that not the *brain* but the *heart* was the proper *Soil* for that celeſtial Plant, and therefore did not

amuſe their *Proſelytes* with curious queſtions, but ſet them to the active part of their Religion. We ſee what brief and plain inſtructions S. *Peter* gives his *Catechumeni*, Acts 2. 38. *Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remiſſion of ſins:* And this it ſeems as a full preparation for the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, which he there promiſes upon theſe only conditions. This was that vigorous Seed which at once *ſprung up* ſuddenly, and *rooted deep* too, and produc'd the liberal harveſt of that day: But ſure had thoſe three thouſand Souls been Catechiz'd by our modern *Caſuiſts*, we had ſeen a wide difference, not only in the expedition but ſucceſs. In like manner we ſee, *Acts* 8. How ſhort a Creed qualified in S. *Philip*'s judgment for the Eunuch's Baptiſm: and we find S. *Paul* whoſe education enabled him for the ſubtileſt definitions, yet delivers his whole doctrine in this *compendium*, Acts 20. 21. *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; and 'tis obſervable how he introduces this with a profeſſion that *he had kept back nothing that was profitable for them*, Verſe 20. and ſeconds it, Verſe 27. with another, That *he had not ſhunned to declare unto them the whole counſel of God*; from whence 'tis obvious for the ſhalloweſt diſcourſer to infer, that the whole counſel of God, as far as it is incumbent for man to know, at leaſt *nceſſitate medii*, is compriz'd in that one Breviate of Evangelical Truth: And certainly whilſt all the *diviſion* of theſe generals, was the diſtributing them into *practice*, they were found moſt fertile ſeminaries of all Vertue; but when they came to be *dichotomiz'd*, and canton'd out into curious aerial notions, they loſt their *prolifick* nature: That fruitful land became a wilderneſs, a wild and intricate maze, where men ſooner loſe *themſelves*, than find either *truth* or *holineſs*.

Primitive Chriſtians deſir'd rather to believe and adore, than contend and diſpute about their duty.

11. When Chriſtianity firſt atteſted it ſelf by *miracles*, it produced in the hearts of its Converts, a firm aſſent to the truth of the *Doctrine*, and an awful reverence and adoration of *that God*, who had given ſuch power unto men, awaking them to an Enquiry after *duty*, ſo to propitiate that *omnipotence* whoſe fury it appear'd impoſſible to bear: And this ſure was a much more *genuine effect*, than if they had buſied themſelves in thoſe many *unprofitable curioſities*, nice, yet bold enquiries into the divine Attributes, which now a-days ſerve only to ſupplant that pious veneration we owe to them.

12. In like manner the comprehenſive enunciation of *Chriſt*, *Mar.* 16. 16. *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved, and he that believeth not ſhall be damn'd*, was receiv'd by the firſt Chriſtians, as the condition on which the two ſo diſtant ſtates of Salvation or Damnation depended, and accordingly excited their diligence, to attain the *one*, and avoid the *other*. And this certainly was a much more concerning employment, than to have entertained themſelves with the modern diſpute, whether ſome antecedent decree of God had not irreverſibly determin'd them to the one or other; a *diſquiſition* that has ſerv'd only to keep us *Idly buſie*, ſet our heads a working, but folds up our *hands* like *Solomon*'s ſluggard in our boſoms. So alſo when S. *Paul* affirms it the deſign of *Chriſt's giving himſelf for us, to purifie to himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works*; the *Primitive* Chriſtians had no other deſign, than to comport with that his purpoſe; to be what he died to make them, and to atteſt their *Zeal* to good works, by being actually *rich* in them. They took *Chriſt*'s word, That *he that gave the meaneſt dole for his ſake, ſhould not loſe his reward*; thought themſelves ſure enough upon his promiſe, and never diſputed the proportion either of Worth or Congruity between the work and wages; and had the *Modern* done the like, our *works* had not ſo unhapplily evaporated into *words*; we had talkt leſs and done more.

13. 'Twere

The multiplying of Creeds and Opinions hath divided the Faith and decay'd the life of Religion.

13. 'Twere eaſie to draw the Parallel through all the points which buſied the devotion of the *firſt* Ages, and the curioſity of the *latter:* By all which it would be evident, how much Chriſtian Doctrine has *loſt* in its Efficacy, ſince it *gain'd* in its Bulk; how we have embaſed our *Coin* by multiplying it; and have divided our *ſumm* into ſo many, and ſo ſmall Fractions, as our *Arithmetick* can ſcarce *number*, never *unite*. We ſhould think him very ridiculous, that ſhould hope to advance his *crop*, by grinding the *corn* he ſows; yet methinks, this has been the Method of our Spiritual husbandmen, who have ſcarce ſuffered one grain of our Faith to eſcape entire. 'Tis ſaid that the *Ant*, when ſhe lays in her winter ſtock, bites the ends of the *Corn*, as being *Naturaliſt* enough to know that will certainly prevent its ſprouting. And ſure that little contemptible creature whom *Solomon* appoints to preach *induſtry* to the *ſluggard*, may in this point read *Philoſophy* too, to our greateſt *Doctors*; convince them that the ſeed which they mangle with ſo many Diſtinctions and Diviſions, will never ſpring up into Chriſtian *practice:* It will rather be like the *Dragons* teeth, *Cadmus* is ſaid to have ſown, whoſe immediate production was a *hoſtile band* combating one another. A *fable*, which, God knows, we have found too ſadly *moraliz'd* in our School-contentions, only with this unhappy difference, that ours are more *immortal*; our *Serpentine* breed fight, but never die; oppoſe, but deſtroy not one another,

The Church is over-run with Schiſm and Contention,

14. And then 'twill not appear ſtrange to ſee the firſt ſeeds of Diſcord ſo prodigiouſly encreas'd, that they now over-ſpread the face of the Earth: for, whereas in all other things there is a ſucceſſion, one generation goes and another comes, and ſo though the *ſpecies* continue, the *Individuals* periſh; theſe ſeem to have the accurſt Privilege of propagating and not expiring; and to have reconcil'd the procreativeneſs of *corporeal*, with the duration of *incorporeal* Subſtances: This is ſuch an advantage toward their *multiplication*, that we may grieve, but cannot wonder to find them *ſwarm*; not like *Bees* to bring profit, but like *Locuſts* to devour every green thing in the Land; nor is it now in the power of all the *Magicians of Egypt* to caſt them out: For were it poſſible ever to become *Satan*'s intereſt to ſuppreſs them, he would certainly find himſelf in the caſe of one of his young Conjurers, to have *rais'd* more Spirits than he could *lay*. Men's now *irritated Paſſions*, and formed intereſts, the great fomenters of diſputes, would prove too *ſturdy Devils*, even for *Beelzebub* himſelf to Exorciſe.

which is now kept up in ſmaller and leſſer matters.

15. But 'tis too ſure his Kingdom will never ſo divide againſt it ſelf; it ſuits not only with its *Nature*, but with his *Ends* to perpetuate our Strifes; and therefore as if our doctrinal debates were not enough to ſecure his purpoſe, he has an auxiliary troop of ritual differences to attach us. The *Leproſie* which infeſts the ſolider parts of our Religion, has paſt from the *Body* to the very *Garments*; the moſt exterior *adherencies*, Habits, Geſtures, Days, every thing that has but the remoteſt ſubſerviency to Piety, are become the *objects* of fierce Conteſts, and have ſo encreas'd the number and heat of our quarrels, that 'tis unneceſſary, perhaps impoſſible, to add more; if he can but keep up theſe, as God knows he is too like to do, his Kingdom will be competently guarded, they being his greateſt *ſecurity* againſt that *power of Godlineſs*, that vital force of Chriſtianity, he ſo much dreads: That they are ſo, is obvious enough to him that takes but the groſſeſt confus'd view of them. But that we may better diſcern the degrees of his *advantage* and our own *miſchief*, 'twill not be amiſs to conſider them more attentively, make ſome diſtinct obſervations, not of *all*, for that were endleſs, but of *ſome* of their moſt eminent *Effects*, which we ſhall

find ſo pernicious and deſtructive, as ſufficiently ſpeak their relation and ſubſerviency to the great *Abaddon*.

Contention about things Indifferent makes us backward to thoſe that are of greater concern;

16. And in the firſt place, if we conſider them only *privatively*, as they ſupplant and juſtle out our greater concerns, we ſhall find them ſadly miſchievous, indeed to ſuch a degree, that were they not chargeable with any *poſitive* ill, they were by this their mere *negative* Force, competent Inſtruments of our *ruine*. Did they actually convey no venome, yet while they ſubſtract our nouriſhment, their effects will be ſure to be deadly; *Grace* as well as *Nature* being liable to be ſtarv'd as well as poiſon'd. *Chriſtianity* is not a dull unactive, but ſtirring buſie State, and therefore we ſtill find it in the *Goſpel* repreſented under the *Metaphors* which imply the greateſt Induſtry and Activity; 'tis a *trade*, a *watch*, a *race*, a *combat*, and it aſſigns us task enough to juſtifie the propriety of the *Tropes*: And therefore as on the one hand, the ſleepy Profeſſor will at laſt find he has but dreamt of thoſe glorious Rewards he expects; ſo on the other, he that frames himſelf another *Scheme*, that labours, but not in God's vineyard, that buſies himſelf in things extrinſick to that one great *Sphere of motion*, the evangelical Precepts, will finally diſcern that he has but rolled *Syſiphus* his ſtone, eſpous'd a *toil* under which he may indeed be *weary* and heavy *laden*, but will never find *reſt* to his Soul.

which is the Devil's policy to keep up our Differences and Diviſions.

17. And then what can be more perfectly adapted to his aim, who deſires to propagate his own eternal reſtleſneſs unto us, than thus to commute our tasks, exchange theſe *pleaſant and gainful ones*, which God aſſigns us, for thoſe *uneaſie* and *fruitleſs*, we impoſe on our ſelves? 'Tis true, we find too many of thoſe unprofitable works of darkneſs to buſie and employ us: But I think no one, nay, I am apt to ſay not all others together, have proved ſo effectual to his purpoſe, as this of raiſing and maintaining *parties in Religion*. 'Tis too uſual a policy of States to ſecure themſelves from the *fear* of a potent Neighbour, by fomenting a civil *diſcord* in his Kingdom: *Satan* has in this inſtance found it a lucky Stratagem, it having proved the moſt powerful revulſive of his danger. I will not examine, whether he borrowed it from, or lent it to our *Machiavilians*, but ſure he may from his own experience recommend it with the atteſtation of a *Probatum eſt*.

Our Diſputes in Religion divert us from minding the great Buſineſs of our Souls.

18. Indeed this art of diverſion gives him a full ſecurity againſt all he fears in our Chriſtianity, for 'tis not the title he envies to us, or dreads himſelf; we know he long ſince had courage to contemn the name even of Chriſt, when invoked by thoſe whoſe practices joyn'd with him in defying it; while we are but *Jewiſh Exorciſts*, make no other uſe of Chriſt, but to get us a reputation and a trade, he can deal well enough with us. *Seven Sons of Sceva* are not half ſo terrible to him as *one S. Paul*; 'tis him only he fears, that to the *form* has joyn'd *the power of Godlineſs*: That *Exorciſm* he knows he cannot reſiſt, and therefore has very dexterouſly found a way to divert it, by engaging us in thoſe contentions which allow us not to think of the practical part of our profeſſion: by the *confus'd noiſe* of Battel, quite drowing that *voice behind us*, which ſays, *This is the way, walk in it*. Nay, by this ſubtilty he does not only divert, but foreſtal alſo; like the *Philiſtines*, allows no Spear or Sword that may be us'd *againſt him*, but takes up all thoſe Inſtruments by which we ſhould work the *work of God*. We know to all affairs of Importance there are three neceſſary *concurrents*, without which they can never be diſpatcht; *Time*, *Induſtry*, and *Faculties*: And the more weighty and difficult the buſineſs is, the greater Degree of each of theſe is requiſite. Now certainly the *intereſt* of

our Souls is not the ſlighteſt *concern* we have: The avoiding eternal *miſery*, the acquiring endleſs *bliſs* is not ſo trivial, or ſo eaſie a matter, as to be the Work of a *moment*, the purchace of ſome few *yawning wiſhes*, or *volatile fancies:* He who is to diſpenſe the Rewards, has propos'd us other Conditions, aſſign'd us Work which takes up no leſs *time* than that of our *whole lives*; no leſs *intention* than of our *whole powers:* And then if we ſuffer any thing elſe to interpoſe, and defaulk what is thus entirely requiſite; if we cut new *Channels* for that which ſhould run in this one *full current*, 'tis eaſie to divine what the event will be: For man being finite both in his nature and operations, the time and attention he beſtows on one thing, muſt neceſſarily be ſubſtracted from another. And therefore if our Diſputes about Religion entertain and buſie us, they muſt unavoidably interrupt our attendance on practick Duties; and ſo whileſt we quarrel with *one another*, give our great *Maſter* too juſt ground of quarrel with *us all*, by neglecting the great, and indeed only Buſineſs entruſted to us.

Our diſputes rob us of too much of our precious time,

19. Now indeed that our contentions do thus divert us, is too apparent to any that ſhall conſider it in any of the three forementioned particulars; for, firſt for our *time*, they do not only *inſenſibly* ſteal away much of it (a modeſty which moſt other diverſions do ſtill retain) but *Magiſterially* exact it, and accordingly have large parcels of it ſolemnly and avowedly devoted to them; the *ſcanning old queſtions*, and *raiſing new ones*, having been the profeſt Buſineſs of many Men's lives; their very Vocation and Trade wherein they have arrived to ſuch *eminence*, as ſhews they made *liberal oblations* of their time to it: And of this every Age has left ſo many Records, as the mere reading them would allow few vacant minutes to the ſucceeding: And had not *time* a little revenged his own quarrel, and conſum'd many of thoſe *writings*, by which himſelf was waſted, the *Hyperbole* would not be very extravagant in this caſe, which we find warrantably us'd in another, *John* 21. That even *the world it ſelf could not contain the Books which have been written.* As it is, there are more than enough to employ, nay, devour *time*; for when Men once launch into the vaſt *Sea* of Controverſie, they are toſſed there endleſly, and ſeldom recover a *harbour*, Difficulties like *waves* crouding one upon the neck of another; And accordingly we ſee in *Polemick Diſputes*, how every rejoynder ſwells bigger and bigger, till like the Prophet's *cloud*, from a *hand breadth* it over-ſpread the *Heavens*; every little Manual becomes the Parent of vaſt Volumes; and unleſs the evil cure it ſelf by Majoration; unleſs the greatneſs of the task bring in deſpair to ſupplant curioſity, and keep Men from reading, the *ſpectators* will have as little reſpite, as the *Combitants*; both Writers and Readers will be ſo engroſt, that they will have little leiſure for any thing elſe. And I dare in this appeal to any that have engag'd deep either way, whether they have not found it experimentally true: I wiſh they would but ſnatch ſome broken parcel as a *plank* from the common *ſhipwrack* of their time; reſcue a few minutes for a ſober reflection, and audit what real Profit accrues to them from the expence of ſo many precious Hours; how much it advances that grand buſineſs for which their Time *here* was allotted, and according to which their Eternity *hereafter* will be awarded: always remembring, that if it promote it not, it hinders it, by diverting that *time* which ſhould have been ſo *employed:* And indeed there cannot be a more comprehenſive *miſchief* than this of the *loſs of time*, it being that which vertually contains the fruſtrating of all other Advantages, whereby we ſhould work out our Salvation. The operations even of *Chriſt* himſelf were, he tells us, limited to a certain ſeaſon: *I muſt work the work of my*

Father whilſt it is day, the night cometh when no man can work; and if the Night overtake us, it matters not how we are ſtored with inſtruments of Action, ſince they all at once then become uſeleſs. Our Laws anciently ſet a greater *penalty* upon the ſtealing *Beaſts of Breed*, than on other Cattel of the *ſame ſpecies*, as calculating the damage by the poſſibilities of which the owner was robb'd. Time is the *univerſal womb* of things and actions; and therefore when we loſe *that*, we ſuffer an accumulative prejudice, forfeit our *Rights in reverſion*, as well as our *Poſſeſſions*, our *capacities*, as well as *enjoyments*. As in an Abortion the unhappy mother, beſides the fruſtration of her hopes, and child-birth pains ſuſtain'd, acquires an aptitude to miſcarry for the future, and never to be able to bring forth a vital birth: And thus, God knows, multitudes of *Embryon*-purpoſes periſh, and the miſery of it is, they are our beſt that do ſo. We generally purſue our *frivolous projects* with an *active vigour*, but keep our great and concerning *affairs* only in deſign till *death* come and ſurprize us, which like the *fatal Metamorphoſes* the Poets talk of, fixes us in the poſture it finds us, and ſo preſents us to *Judgment*. Now I would know of the moſt eager Contender, whether he would not chuſe then to be found with his hands ſtretcht out in *prayer* to God, or *alms* to the poor, rather than dealing *blows* amongſt his fellow-ſervants; if he would, certainly 'tis his concern to put himſelf into that form he would then appear in, to huſband his little ſpan of time ſo, as may ſtand him in ſtead when time ſhall be no more.

and miſſpend moſt of our ſtrength and Induſtry,

20. But if Men will needs be *improvident*, yet why will they be *ridiculous* too? If they will barter away their time, methinks they ſhould at leaſt have ſome eaſe in exchange, but to be induſtrious ill huſbands, to loſe all their *advantages*, and none of their *toil*, is ſuch a ſolemn piece of folly, as is at once matter of Scorn and Wonder; yet this is the very caſe here; our *wranglings* do not only exhauſt our time but our *ſtrength* too: We purſue them with ſo vehement an intention, as if our Faith propos'd not to us any other victory, but over this ſort of Opponents: We run our ſelves breathleſs in this *race*, where the *prize* is only a few *fading Leaves*, or what is more tranſitory, a little *popular applauſe*; and make not towards the incorruptible Crown, till we are grown too feeble and decrepit for the other purſuit. Men macerate their Bodies, and waſte their Spirits in *polemick ſtudies*, preſcribe themſelves no time of diſcharge from that *War*, till they are able no longer to wield their *weapons*, and then, when mere Impotence makes them *peaceable*, begin to cry out of *contention*, ſnatch up *Devotion* when Controverſie begins to be too heavy for them, and at their Death *pray for that peace* of the Church, which they have made the buſineſs of their life to *diſturb*. This as it ſufficiently atteſts what mens thoughts are in their cool blood, what apprehenſions they have of the way when they draw near their journeys End; ſo does it abundantly evince the unſpeakable prejudice Piety receives from our Diſputes; Thoſe have the active and *vigorous Abettors*, while That is turn'd off to languiſhing *bed-rid Votaries*. So that the *diviſion* between theſe two, is like that of the *Cattel* between *Jacob* and *Laban*, all the ſtronger to the one, and feeble to the other: Would God the ſcene were not in one reſpect chang'd, and that the *Syrian* had not here got the better ſhare. But in the mean time what greater advantage can *Satan* wiſh for, our ſtrength and induſtry is diverted upon theſe foreign expeditions, and *Sion* is left to be guarded by the lame and the blind, ſuch only as are not able to follow the Camp, and then 'tis not ſtrange to ſee what ſucceſsful aſſaults he has made, That that true *practick Virtue* which once made ſuch victorious ſalleys

on the heathen World, is now baffled in its own Quarters, beaten from its Works, and driven to ſeek ſhelter in obſcure corners, immures it ſelf in ſome few private breaſts, and ſo like an exil'd Prince, makes only ſhift to *live*, when it ſhould *reign*. But alas, Shall we for ever ſuffer our ſelves to be thus befool'd, ſhall this his ſtale ſtratagem after ſo many hundred years uſe, nay, and detection too, loſe nothing of its Efficacy? Muſt we always waſte our ſtrength in forging ſhackles for our ſelves? This is ſuch an infatuation as *Hoſea* ſpeaks of, *Chap.* 9. 7. *The Prophet is a fool, the Spiritual man is mad:* Would God, we would once put our ſelves under the diſcipline of ſerious recollection, it might perhaps cure the Phrenſie: Let him who has with unwearied diligence watcht all advantage againſt his *Antagoniſt*; rack'd and tortured every period of his diſcourſe, to make it confeſs an abſurdity: Let him, I ſay, conſider, how much better that *Induſtry* had been employed in diſcovering the *fallacies* of our common Adverſary, that old Sophiſter, who puts the moſt *abuſive Elenchs* on us, whilſt we are moſt buſie in putting them upon one another. Good God! how might true vital Chriſtianity at this day have flouriſht, if we would have beſtowed our pains the right way? At how much a cheaper rate might we have *cheriſht*, than we *deſtroy* her? All parties pretend to be very careful of this *Vine*, are very buſie in ſetting traps *for the little Foxes*, all whom they are pleaſed to call *Hereticks*; and in the mean time take no care of the *wild Boar*, let that not only ſpoil her *branches*, but ſtock up her *roots*, ſuffer the moſt ſavage beſtial vices to deſtroy both Power and Form of Godlineſs together. Thus unhappily do we divert our intentions from our moſt important concerns. And as *Archimedes* is ſaid to have been ſo vehemently intent upon a *Geometrical figure*, that he heard not of the taking of the City, till an Enemy gave him his *information* and *death* together: So do we ſo buſie our ſelves in drawing our ſeveral *Schemes* of Religion (every of which will pretend to no leſs than *Demonſtration*) that in the mean time, that which alone is *true Religion*, is expos'd to the fury of the Enemy, ſack'd, ruinated, and like the plough'd up *Jewiſh Sanctuary*, not one ſtone left upon another. Certainly moſt of the *queſtions* which at this day diſturb Chriſtendom, have *in reſpect of their matter* no Propriety toward the propagating good Life, but, *in reference to their way of managery*, all aptneſs to hinder it; how much were it then for our *eaſe* as well as *profit*, to turn us into the plain road, where none of theſe Thorny difficulties will encumber us? Alas, why ſhould the *Romaniſt* ſo ſweat to maintain his *purgatory flame*, as if he already felt its heat, and would in this world antedate thoſe pains, when the ſame Induſtry beſtowed here to *purifie himſelf from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*, would ſubſtract the matter of that *Fire*, and leave little for that *furnace* to refine; which were doubtleſs a much ſecurer way, even according to his *own principles*, than to truſt to the uncertain devotion of *others*, to fetch him out when once deeply ingulph'd: 'Tis ſurely much better to ſtarve that Fire by ones own *innocence*, than to leave it to be extinguiſht by the Tears and Piety of *ſurviving friends*. Why ſhould the *Socinian* ſo eagerly contend for the poſſibility of keeping the Law, when *one example* would convince him more than a *thouſand arguments*. Let him bend his ſtudy to make himſelf an inſtance of his own doctrine; and then though he do finally fail in proving his *Hypotheſis*, yet, if he do his utmoſt, he will not fail of a better *triumph* than that which the Schools can give: And ſo will even from his error extract advantage, his very *ſtraying* will by a happy *Antiperiſtaſis*, lead him into the *way*. Why does the *Predeſtinarian* ſo adventurouſly climb into Heaven, to ranſack the celeſtial *Archives*, read

God's *hidden Decrees*, when with leſs labour he may ſecure an *Authentick tranſcript* within himſelf; let him according to S. *Peter*'s advice, *Add to his faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance*, &c. And that chain of virtues will ſtand him in much more ſtead, than if he could as infallibly (as ſome have confidently) demonſtrate every link of *Predeſtination*: 'Tis the aſſiduous *practice* of Duty will make his calling and election ſure; and unleſs he can confute that divine *Axiome*, that *without holineſs none ſhall ſee the Lord*; he cannot but confeſs he may more profitably buſie his thoughts in labouring to become holy, than in diſputing whether he can chuſe to be ſo or not. Or laſtly, Why do we *Chriſtians of ſeveral perſwaſions*, ſo fiercely argue againſt the *ſalvability* of each other, as if it were not only our Opinion, but our Intereſt and our Wiſh, *That all ſhould be damn'd, but thoſe of our particular Sect*; when God knows, not only every Society, but every ſingle perſon has enough to do, to *work out his own ſalvation*, which if we will take the *Apoſtle*'s word, is to be done *with fear and trembling, Phil.* 2. 12. A temper very widely diſtant from that of cenſuring and judging. And ſure we ſhould not think that *malefactor* more meriting, or more likely to be acquitted, who ſhould leap from the *Bar* to the *Bench*, and there condemn the whole Gaol but himſelf. 'Twas a ſober and Chriſtian *reply* of a late learned Gentleman, who being askt by one whether a *Papiſt* might be ſaved, anſwered, *You may be ſaved without knowing that*. And would we confine our cares and enquiries to thoſe things which concern that one great Intereſt, we might take *leſs pains*, and yet do *more work*; be leſs *buſie-bodies*, but more *fruitful Chriſtians*; and then ſure 'tis time we ask our ſelves the *Wiſe Man*'s queſtion, *Eccleſ.* 5. 16. *What profit hath he that laboureth for the wind?* And at laſt give over this unthriving diligence, and not ſo emulate the moſt ſtupid of Beaſts, as to make our ſelves burthens, only that we may couch under them.

and miſemploy the great parts and abilities of the more knowing and learned.

21. And were this only *Iſſachar*'s lot, 'twere the leſs to be regretted, but alſo *Zabulon* herein invades his portion; 'tis they that handle the *Pen of the Writer*, that have engroſt *this error*, and will not ſuffer it to be a *Plebeian* one. None do ſo much this way miſ-employ the two vulgar talents of Time and Induſtry, as thoſe who have a third ſuperadded to them, that of Extraordinary Faculties and endowments, which they do as prodigally laviſh as either of the former. The Beginners or Abettors of *contentions* have generally been Perſons of the moſt *acute refined wits* and *excellent learning*, which has enabled them for thoſe quirks and ſubtilties, of which groſſer underſtandings would have remain'd more happily ignorant. A ſtrange production, that the *greateſt beauties* of Nature and Art ſhould ingender the *fouleſt deformity* in Religion. Thus alas, have *Satan*'s Altars the pre-emption of *God's*, the fatteſt Oblation brought to feed the fire of *contention* whilſt that of *devotion* expires for want of Nouriſhment. It was indeed no wonder, that the blind zeal of *Pagans* had made him ſo wantonly nice, that none but the choiceſt victims would ſerve his turn; none but an *Andromeda* and an *Iphigenia*, Royal and Virgin-ſacrifices propitiate his infernal *Deities*: but that among *Chriſtians* he ſhould ſtill have the *ſame Election*, have the richeſt treaſures of thoſe, who ſay they war againſt him, laid at his feet, have his choiceſt weapons out of his Enemies magazine, is a riddle that can ſcarce be ſolved, but by concluding *Idolatry* has only chang'd its *form*, and that he ſits as ſecurely enſhrin'd in *mens paſſions* and animoſities, as ever he did in an *Idol Temple*; ſo that he ſeems rather to have loſt the *pomp*, than the *power* of Regiment. But admit, that he were not herein ſo immediately God's rival, that theſe *ſpeculative debates* had

none of thoſe adherencies, which do ſo directly gratifie him, yet ſtill he is ſecur'd of gaining ſomewhat at rebound; for alaſs, when mens faculties are thus employed, what Weapons are there left for the defence of true *practick vertue*, and God knows, ſhe needs them but too much: Mens *luſts* are grown ſubtle Diſputants, ſo that the moſt improved *reaſon* may find work enough to manage the Conteſt; And ſurely would men of parts timely have bent their endeavours this way, vice could not have got ſo ſtrong a party. Men are aſhamed to be *Proſelytes* to a weak Arguer, as thinking they muſt part with their *reputation*, as well as their *ſin:* And certainly nothing is a more general *diſcouragement* from Piety, than the *opinions of its Votaries* not being Perſons of Parts, and exalted Underſtandings; a Prejudice as old as the time of our *Saviour*, as may appear from *John* 7. Would God our greateſt *Rabbies* would ſadly conſider how much they have contributed to this ſcandal, while by laying out their parts on *Polemick niceties*, they have neglected the more weighty part of their buſineſs, and given too much Atteſtation to that ſcandalous Maxim, That *Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion.* Certainly this is quite to miſtake their *Commiſſion*, which is not that of a *Herauld*, to proclaim War amongſt Men, but that of an *Embaſſador*, to reconcile them firſt to holineſs, and by it to God; And doubtleſs *one ſoul* gain'd to Piety, would more promote their account, than *many thouſands* ſecured to a Sect or Party. We find how ſad the doom was of that Servant who wrapt up his Talent, but we have no cauſe to think it would have been at all eaſier, if he had melted the Talent into Bullets, to maintain the skirmiſh with his fellows: Whether that be not the caſe of ſome who have received not the *one* Talent but the *five*, I leave it to be diſcuſſed between God and their own Conſciences; but in the *interim* 'tis ſad to ſee how unhappily Men engage their endeavours, which ſeems to repreſent the reverſe of *Eſay*'s *Prophecy*, we have beat our ploughſhares into ſwords, and our pruning-hooks into ſpears, all the inſtruments of fertility and growth in *Grace*, into Engins of *War* and *diſcord*; and then it muſt needs be a moſt deplorable condition to which Chriſtianity is reduced; which ſeems in this to be under the ſame calamity, which her diſtreſt profeſſors ſuffer from the *Turkiſh* tyranny, whileſt her hopefulleſt and moſt pregnant Children, are like *Janizaries* and *Timariots* trained up to fight againſt her. And let none wonder that I call it fighting againſt her, when yet perhaps none of them do formally renounce her; for that Circumſtance only determines the War to be *inteſtine*, not *foreign*; and if our own ſad Experiences had not too much qualified us to judge, I might appeal to the univerſal vote of Mankind, which of thoſe were the moſt deſtructive. Indeed were there no other act of hoſtility diſcernible, but that which we have hitherto inſiſted on, the intercepting her ſupplies, the cutting off from her that time, induſtry and gifts, whereby ſhe would be nouriſht and ſupported, that were irreparably injurious to her, and conſequently moſt grateful to that grand *Enemy*, who, as hath been ſhew'd, makes advantage of our Wranglings, or Diſſentions *with one another*, to wreck his more inveterate Malice *on us all.*

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Diſputes, as they ſupplant Charity.

Our Diſputes are a great obſtruction and hindrance to our Charity.

1. BUT alas, the miſchief of theſe debates can never be deſcrib'd by bare *negatives*, there are multitudes of *poſitive* ills, that inſeparably adhere to them, and thoſe of ſo deſtructive a force, that if Chriſtianity were *beleaguer'd* and *famiſht* by the former, ſhe is *ſtorm'd* and *batter'd* by theſe, and ſo is aſcertain'd to ſink under all the methods of ruine. In the front of theſe we may well rank thoſe diſplacencies and animoſities which are the product of our ſpeculative differences, and which do indeed ſo naturally reſult from them, that 'tis not to be hoped ſo long as the *one* continues, that the *other* will ever ceaſe. For though in *practice* we often ſee a bewitching Sin dethrone the Reaſon, and make men act as if they had no ſuch ſuperior principle to guide them, yet in matters of *Speculation* their *affections* are generally ſtrongly influenc'd by their *underſtandings*. We do not only approve, but love thoſe notions wherewith we are prepoſſeſt, which kindneſs, as it propagates it ſelf to the *abetters* of the ſame Tenets, ſo alſo it inſinuates diſlikes to the *oppoſers*. And as that oppoſition advances, ſo the diſguſt does too, till at laſt the Scene ſhifts, and the *Perſons* are at a greater war than the *Opinions*. But we need not thus derive a proof from the *cauſes*, when the thing does too demonſtrably atteſt it ſelf by the *effects*; for what iſſues are there of the mortalleſt hatred, which do not plentifully flow from this fountain? *Humane nature* we know has but three ways of actuating its paſſions; by *thought*, by *word*, and by *deeds*; and we may ſurely conclude the feud very bitter that employs all theſe Engines, as 'tis too viſible this does; for though the *former* of theſe be in its own nature inſcrutable to all but Omniſcience; yet the *two latter* are, according to *Chriſt*'s own Rule, of the *Tree by its fruits*, infallible *Criterions* of them; and thoſe make ſuch liberal diſcoveries, that I think I may appeal to any who have eſpous'd a *party*, whether they have not with the firſt diſcriminating rudiments of their own Sect, imbib'd a ſecret *confus'd prejudice* to all others. Nay, I fear there are but few of ſo mortified paſſions, as to have ſtopt there, and not advanc'd to a direct averſion, and alienation of mind. Indeed were it not for this, 'twere ſcarce poſſible for ſo many of the *vulgar*, to be ſuch *Bigots* in their ſeveral Factions; for alas, their Intellects are generally too *groſs*, to have any *clear* apprehenſion of the Points they contend for; their Leaders only give them ſome *general confus'd notions*, juſt enough to excite their *diſpleaſure* againſt all Diſſenters, and then their *anger* muſt preſently be call'd *zeal*, and inſtead of the more uneaſie task of ſuppreſſing their paſſion, this expedient ſerves at once to hallow and gratifie it: Nay, ſo ridiculous have ſome mens prepoſſeſſions of this kind been, that they would ſcarce allow thoſe to be *entire men* whom they thought not *ſound believers*, but have fanſied I know not what *bodily* as well as *Mental* Monſtroſities in thoſe they were pleas'd to call *Hereticks*; a piece of childiſh credulity which the emiſſaries of ſome factions have not diſdain'd to make their advantage of. But theſe inward diſguſts and rancours are but the firſt bound of this ball of contention, when this leaven is once in the *heart*, it will quickly diffuſe it ſelf, and both *tongue* and *hands* will be *tainted* with it. Hence comes it, that diſputes in religion are managed with ſuch virulency and bitterneſs, that one would think the Diſputants had put off much of *Humanity*, before they come thus to treat of *Divinity*.

vinity. The government of the Tongue is a piece of morality which ſober nature dictates, which yet in this inſtance many even of our greateſt Scholars ſeem totally to have unlearnt; For whether we conſider the unſeemly reproaches, or rigid cenſures, wherewith almoſt all parties purſue their Antagoniſts, we have reaſon to ſay with S. *James*, *The tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly poiſon:* Would God their *guilt* of this kind, did not ſo loudly proclaim it ſelf, as to ſuperſede the need of *proof*. 'Tis too obvious that the *Satyr* has uſurpt the chair, and *Polemick Diſcourſes* are degenerated into *libels* and *invectives*; our Controvertiſts fall from *arguments* to *reproaches*, as if their Zeal lay more to blaſt their adverſaries *fame*, than confute his *error*; and were this only in perſonal extemporary debates, it might have the excuſe of an indeliberate paſſion. Indeed it were to be wiſht that all words of this ſort might vaniſh in that breath that utters them; that as they reſemble the Wind in *fury* and *impetuouſneſs*, ſo they might do alſo in *tranſientneſs*, and *ſudden expiration:* But alas, a courſe is taken to immortalize them, they become *records*, and our moſt elaborate *controverſial writings*, like the Earth after the curſe, over-run with theſe briars and thorns, Sarcaſms, Contumelies and Invectives filling ſo many *Pages*, that were thoſe weeded out, many *volumes* would be reduced to a more *moderate bulk* as well as *temper*. Nor are our *cenſures* any thing more modeſt than our *reproaches*, every petty difference is mutually upbraided to each party as a defection from the faith, ſo that we ſcarce know a milder *name* than Hereſie, nor *doom*, than Damnation. And as if the viſible obliquities or errors would not afford us indictments enough againſt one another, there is a cloſer inſpection made, every *poſition* is ript up, and curiouſly diſſected, to ſee what *Embryo* is in its womb, what ſeeds there are of monſtrous productions, which though perhaps the native ſtrength of the Principle would never have *animated*, yet the preternatural heat of an Antagoniſt can quickly *hatch* them (like the *Chickens* at *Grand Cairo*) into life and vigorous being: And if by a long chain of (perhaps fallacious) Inferences, ſome ſuch Imputation is faſtned upon a *Theſis*, then all who embrace that, are charg'd alſo with all this *ſpurious brood*, though they never ſo ſolemnly renounce and diſclaim them. A practice ſure very uncharitable; for ſuppoſe ſuch *conſequences* never ſo regularly deduced from my *opinion*, yet ſo long as I ſeriouſly diſavow and deteſt them, I may indeed be thought *unwiſe* in not diſcerning the connexion, but ſure not *impious*. So that unleſs want of *Logick* be a *damning ſin*, no man can hence be authoriz'd to pronounce me *reprobate:* And I cannot think that God, whoſe rigor bends againſt the faults of our *wills*, rather than our *underſtandings*, and who at the laſt great aſſize will aſſume our own Conſciences into the Judicature upon us, will ever ſentence me for thoſe *deductions*, how horrid ſoever, which I never made mine, or that I ſhall ever find my ſelf in Hell for a *miſperſwaſion* which I never entertain'd. But there are ſome whoſe Cenſures are not ſo *artificial*, yet no leſs *ſevere*, who beg their *Poſtulata*, and taking it for granted that ſuch and ſuch are the only ſanctified opinions, make them the *Shiboleth* by which to diſcriminate not only their *own* Friends, but *God's* too, lock up Heavens gates againſt any who bring not that Ticket for admittance; and though they make the way wide enough to receive the moſt *over-grown Sinner* of their own Opinion, yet they pronounce it impoſſible to the *ſtricteſt piety* of a Diſſenter. And upon ſuch grounds as theſe do we mutually doom one another to perdition, never conſidering that whilſt we ſo briſkly preſage *others* Damnation, we really prepare for our *own*. Alas, our eagerneſs to *heat the furnace ſeven times* *hotter for all that bow not to her dictates,* does but expoſe us to the fate of *Nebuchadnezzar's officers, Dan.* 3. to be our ſelves conſum'd in that flame, wherein we caſt them. 'Tis indeed to be wiſht we would ceaſe to invade God's peculiar, by judging thoſe that muſt ſtand or fall to him: But if we will needs take his *office*, 'tis but equitable we take his *rules* too; and in our *Wrath* remember *Mercy:* But God be bleſſed, 'tis the judgment of our *upright*, yet *gracious* Maſter, that ſhall finally determine us; and not that of our paſſionate fellow-ſervants: If theſe were irreverſible, and the Key of the bottomleſs pit were in our *cuſtody*, we might give Satan *a Writ of Eaſe*, diſcharge him from his perambulations, he would need no more to walk about as a *Lion*, but might ſtill lie in his *Den*, and we ſhould bring in *prey* enough to glut the Devourer: For could we *execute* all we *condemn*, we might ask the Diſciples queſtion, *Matth.* 19. 25. *Who then can be ſaved?* But as theſe ſevere *cenſures*, are a preſent *violation of Charity*, ſo they tend to the perpetuating it by obſtructing a return to that *unity of Judgment*, which might make up the very *original breach*; for while men reciprocally load each others opinions and perſons with deteſtable imputations, if they really ſpeak what they think, they do ſtill more deeply impreſs upon themſelves the prejudice to that which they accuſe, (*hatred* as well as *love* gathering ſtrength by being actuated:) but if they do indeed not believe their own *charge*, yet having once made it, either upon Intereſt or Paſſion, 'tis not probable they will want *pride* to maintain it; and when we conſider how ruling a *piece of carnality* that is, we cannot wonder if it indiſpoſe men to *retractions.* I wiſh we had not too many, and too late inſtances of ſome whoſe weightieſt *objection* againſt a cauſe, has been their own former *violence* againſt it. When Men have once faſtned the brand of Hereſie, Profaneneſs or Blaſphemy upon an *opinion*, they think they cannot afterwards become its *Proſelytes*, without either ſeeming to *aſſume* thoſe Guilts, or at leaſt that of having *falſly charg'd* them upon others: And the Horns of ſuch a *Dilemma* do ſo gore their *reputation*, that it often tempts to ſalve that with the *wounding of Conſcience*, and perſwades them rather to reject their *convictions*, than expoſe their *credits.* And certainly were this the only ill conſequent of our rigorous accuſations, it would be enough to prejudice them as unfit Inſtruments in a Goſpel-deſign; but though they ſuit not with that work to which they ſolemnly *pretend*, they are moſt accommodate to that they really *produce:* For if we examine in the third place, what *influence* theſe our eager conteſts have upon our *actions*, we ſhall find them fully proportionable to our *words.* And firſt negatively, 'tis apparent in too many, that they are apt to confine even the common offices of humanity to their own Sect: And others who do not ſo, yet ſhew ſo great partiality in diſpenſing them, as diſcovers the Name of *Chriſtian* is not half ſo charming, as that of their own *particular Faction.* Were inſtances of this kind as *needful* as they are *numerous*, 'twere eaſie to give multitudes: But I think none that has liv'd in our late confuſions can have wanted occaſions of obſerving it in *others*, at leaſt, if not in *himſelf.* But alas, *omiſſions* are ſcarce worth our notice, when there are ſo many *poſitive Acts* of unkindneſs ſo viſible among us: They know little of *ancient*, and leſs of *modern* Time, that are unacquainted with the *mutual perſecutions*, which almoſt all parties have alternately rais'd one againſt another among Chriſtians: *Confiſcations* and *Baniſhments*, *Gibbets* and *Flames*; Weapons God knows much too carnal for a ſpiritual warfare, yet much more in uſe than thoſe S. *Paul* recommends to *Timothy*, *Gentleneſs*, and *meek inſtructing of Oppoſers.* 2 *Tim.* 2. 25, 26.

And when 'tis conſider'd that thoſe Oppoſers too were Heathens, 'twill be more than a little ſtrange, that Severity ſhould be allowable to *Brethren*, which was interdicted againſt *Aliens*, Is it an eaſier crime to reject the *entire body* of that Faith which was once delivered to the Saints, than to differ in the explication of ſome *one branch* of it? Nay, perhaps only of ſome *corollary* and *deduction* from it, which, as far as it is humane, may be fallible, and therefore can no more command my *aſſent* than it ſatisfies my *judgment*; yet this is generally the moſt that can be affirm'd of our differences; For almoſt what Party is there which doth not avowedly own all that *Faith* which conſtituted the firſt *Chriſtians?* Would God, we did as uniformly embrace the Charity too; and then moſt of our diſputes would be ſuperſeded, at leaſt ſo calm'd, that there ſhould be none of thoſe deſtructive effects which they now produce: For alas, how many funeral piles has this prepoſterous zeal kindled? So that what ſome ſaid of *Draco*'s Laws, may too juſtly be applied to our arguments, that they have been writ rather in *Blood* than *Ink*. But as Chriſt when he forewarn'd his Diſciples of the enſuing perſecution, tells them, not only they ſhall be kill'd, but they ſhall be put out of the Synagogue: So now as if Chriſtians were emulous of every branch of *Jewiſh* cruelty, we tranſcribe that part of the copy too, and either by cauſleſs excommunicating *others*, or ſeparating *our ſelves*, we deny the benefit of *publick communion* to each other: And this is a greater ſeverity than the former, by how much more implacable our hate is againſt what we count *error*, than what we know to be Vice; and by how much the concerns of the *Soul* are more eſtimable than thoſe of the *Body*. The inveterateneſs of thoſe Feuds which riſe from Opinion, may clearly be diſcovered in this inſtance: Let a man have committed all the *outrages* which may render him unworthy to live; yet when we proſecute him to *death*, we willingly afford him all helps towards his *future ſtate*, and no man is ſo inhumane as to refuſe to pray, either *for* or *with* a Malefactor; yet ſome few *ſpeculative differences* are ſuch a gulph betwixt us, that we cannot meet even in that we all acknowledge our common Duty, *the Worſhip of our God*. Certainly among all the accurſed iſſues of our *contention*, there is none more malignant and criminal than this of *Schiſm* and *Separation*, and would men judge diſpaſſionately, more irrational too: For doubtleſs were our caſe ſtated to any ſober Heathen, he would never be able to gueſs, why they who equally acknowledge the advantage and neceſſity of *prayer*, confeſs the ſame God, have the ſame common wants in this world, and hopes in the next, may not ask in the ſame *form* and in the ſame *place*. Alas, is it not enough to be at *diſtance* where we *differ*, but muſt we be ſo alſo where we *agree?* Is unity ſo dreadful to us, that we muſt act contradictions to eſcape it? Surely this is a *ſtranger faſcination* of the ſpirit of Diviſion, than that in the Goſpel-*Demoniack*, which enabled him to break all bonds in ſunder, and like it, abhors the approaches of a *Saviour*, crying out, *What have we to do with thee, thou Jeſus the Son of God, art thou come to torment us?* Who knows what a powerful Exorciſm the united interceſſions of the Chriſtian World might have been; had we joyntly deprecated our quarrels, God might have found a way to have compos'd them, though we could not; and our *tears* might have cemented thoſe breaches which our *diſſents* made, but our *Separation* widens. I know the venerable names of the Sanctions of *Holy Church*, the hundred thirty ſeventh Canon of the Code of the Univerſal Church, which ſays in expreſs terms, Ὅτι οὐ δεῖ αἱρετικοῖς ἢ σχισματικοῖς συνεύχεσθαι, *that we ought not to pray with Hereticks or Schiſmaticks*, and very many warm expreſſions of the *Fathers* are producible in this caſe: But till we excommunicate with the Tears and Sorrows, and publick concernment of the Primitive Chriſtians, who refus'd all acts of kindneſs only out of love, and the moſt ardent Charity, we may by no means lay claim to their pattern, whoſe eſtrangements only flow from malice and inveterate hate. Would we indeed comport with the example of thoſe *happy Times*, we ſhould have fear'd the *guilt of Schiſm* in our ſelves ſo much, as not to have lightly charg'd it upon others; we ſhould have prayed for the *converſion* of Diſſenters, not laid *Anathema*'s upon them, and prayed for their *confuſion*. S. *Paul*, we ſee, *Heb.* 10. 25. reckons the *forſaking of Aſſemblies*, as a degree, at leaſt preparative of *Apoſtaſie*; and from his time throughout all the purer Ages of the Chuch the holy Fathers have generally branded it as the higheſt impiety; and no marvel, for it is one of thoſe Gyant-like ſins, which not only oppreſſes *men*, but invades even *God himſelf*. 'Tis the mangling and aſſaſſinating *that body* to which Chriſt owns an *inſeparable connexion*; the putting him to head ſcattered limbs, inſtead of an entire compact body, as if we meant to refute S. *Paul*, ſhew him 'tis poſſible that *Chriſt may be divided*. Good God! What ſhall we ſay when we ſee Heathen Souldiers eſtimate Chriſt's *coat* higher than Chriſtians do his *body*: They thought the *one* too good to be parted, but we ceaſe not to tear and mangle the *other*, and which is yet more monſtrous, make it *a part of our Religion* to do ſo. We name our *Opinions* our *Faith*, and when under that Title we have enſhrin'd them, *we* make more barbarous Immolations than ever the moſt *ſavage Heathens* did. They ſacrifice ſome few objects of their Love, their *Children*, but we ſacrifice the very *affection*, and think our Zeal *lukewarm* till it have reduced our Charity to *aſhes*. And now if we compare theſe our *Diviſions*, *Wrath* and *Bitterneſs*, with thoſe fundamental, Goſpel-precepts of *Unity*, *Love* and *Meekneſs*, we muſt ſurely ſay we have not there ſo learn'd Chriſt. And then how ridiculous is it, to pretend a Zeal to that Goſpel, whoſe very foundations we undermine? Peace is at once the *bleſſing* and *duty* of Chriſtians, and thoſe heats of *ſpeculative* Conteſts which violate it, will certainly never ſerve to make us either good or happy. And therefore till Charity ceaſe to be an Eſſential part of Chriſtianity (which certainly we muſt burn our Bibles ere we can ſuppoſe) we muſt conclude, that our Diſputes, and the ways whereby we manage them, how much ſoever they pretend to preſerve, do indeed evacuate and deſtroy True, that is, *Practick* Chriſtianity.

CHAP. XI.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Diſputes, as they engage upon Ill Arts and Scandalous Practices, to ſuſtain the eſpouſed Cauſe and Party.

1. AND yet ſo unhappily are many men miſtaken, that theſe *irregular heats* which thus waſte the vital ſpirits of Religion, are thought the moſt *Sovereign Cordials* to ſupport them. The higheſt *Paroxyſm* of this Fever is deem'd the perfecteſt *Health*. Men eſteem the overflowing of their *Gall*, the exuberance of their *Zeal*; and then all the Promiſes to the *faithful Combatant* in Chriſt's camp, they confidently appropriate to that their ſo *eminent Grace*; though indeed it can with no more propriety be call'd ſo, than *Pharaoh*'s *lean kine* might be ſaid to be *fat*, becauſe they had devour'd thoſe that were ſo. In plain terms, men lay ſo great weight upon

Peoples zeal puts them upon ill practices to promote their opinions;

their being of right opinions, and their eagerneſs of abetting them, that they account *that* the *unum neceſſarium*, and think the propagating of thoſe ſo *important a ſervice* to God, as will juſtifie the uſe of the moſt *interdicted inſtruments*, legitimate the moſt *enormous Commiſſions*, that they can fanſie contributive to that pious End: And moreover commute for the neglect of *Practick Duties* in the general tract of their *lives*. I ſhall not here urge the hazard of mens erring in the choice of opinions, nay, the certainty that of many oppoſite one only can be the right; and then to all ſuch as miſs that, their very ground-work fails them. I ſhall only confine my ſelf to the *malignant influence* this Perſwaſion has on *practice*, and in that reſpect I cannot but affirm it a moſt *pernicious deluſion*, which as it tends extremely to the enhanſing the bitterneſs of our conteſts, ſo it may juſtly be reckon'd among the worſt effects of them, and is a moſt *irrefragable proof* how much they obſtruct the vital *efficacy of Religion* in our hearts. Nor is it any new thing for men thus to deceive themſelves; for we find ſuch Confidences as theſe frequently upbraided to the *Jews*, both by the *Prophets* and *Chriſt* himſelf; they thought their *Zeal* to the Temple and ritual obſervances ſo invincibly meritorious, as no *Crime* could defeat, and that their *legal purifications* would render them acceptable in God's Eyes, in ſpight of all their *moral pollutions:* But how fallacious a hope this was, the many ſevere increpations of God do ſufficiently atteſt. Yet certainly their guilt was far below ours; the things they ſo depended on were *parts*, though not the *whole* of their duty; thoſe *Ordinances*, though perhaps ſomewhat *adulterated* by *Rabbinical* mixtures, yet for the main were *inſtituted* by God himſelf, and that with a deſign of diſcriminating and ſeparating them from the reſt of the world; and ſuch peculiarities and privileges as theſe, might have an aptneſs to excite that preſumption: But alas, the caſe is otherwiſe with moſt of us; they are not the *Revelations* of God's Will, not the *Teſtament* of our dying Redeemer, but ſome *Codicils* and *Annexes* of our own we ſo earneſt abett. 'Tis not the *Text* (for then 'twere impoſſible for any that receiv'd the ſame Canon of Scripture to differ) but our *gloſſes* to which we pay ſuch Reverence; and when on that account we *ſever* our ſelves from thoſe to whom the Commands of God, the Blood of our Saviour have moſt cloſely *united* and *cemented* us; we can yet make a ſhift to think that there is ſo much of Sacred in this, as ſhall not only render it highly rewardable, but alſo hallow all other profanations of our lives; and in our *Jehu*-march upon ſuch an expedition, can turn all regrets of Conſcience (like *Joram*'s meſſengers) behind us. That this is ſo, none can doubt who obſerve with what boldneſs men ruſh upon the moſt *unchriſtian ſins*, in purſuit of what they fanſie a *Chriſtian cauſe*. Were it not for this *Amulet*, how were it poſſible for any to think they may venture upon Perjury, Sacrilege, Murder, Regicide, any thing without impeachment to their *Saintſhip*; nay, to think that the only danger lies on the other ſide, in being *remiſly wicked*, that to *ſlack* any thing of the utmoſt ſpeed, is *to do the work of the Lord negligently*. Yet that this has been a prevailing Perſwaſion, we have had too many, and too ſad inſtances; and God grant we may not find them ſo repeated, that our *ſence* may ſuperſede the *uſe* of our memories concerning them; nor has this been peculiar to one only Sect; but thoſe who are otherwiſe at the wideſt diſtance unite in this Principle. They are not only *Fanaticks* that can ſay *grace* over the fouleſt *crimes*, and conſecrate them to the uſe of a *good cauſe*; if we examine the *Dypticks* either of Conclave or Conſiſtory, we ſhall find ſome Saints upon that account, who could never have been ſo upon any other. And when we conſider how often *Heaven* has been mortgaged to gain Auxiliaries from *Hell*, how many have been encouraged to the moſt *damning ſins*, by *promiſes* of being certainly ſaved; we muſt either think that a *Holy cauſe* is omnipotent enough to reverſe *God's decrees*, to *ſave* whom he would *damn*, or elſe that this pretence is one of the moſt ruinous deceits, the moſt fatal Treachery to Souls that ever *Satan* contriv'd, who though he do in all inſtances play the *Mountebank*, yet ſure never more than when on confidence of this *Antidote* he perſwades us thus to ſwallow down his *deadlieſt poiſon*.

1. Upon defamation of mens perſons, and perverting their writings:

2. I muſt not here attempt to enumerate all the *unchriſtian practices*, that have on this ſcore been made, not only *lawful* but *meritorious*; yet there is one of ſo frequent uſe, that I muſt needs advert unto it, and that is, thoſe *calumnies* and *falſhoods*, which are now become a piece of *Eccleſiaſtick* as well as *State Policy*, and a great part of that offenſive armour wherewith our controvertiſts aſſault one another. Indeed if we conſider how many *forges* are daily going for theſe *Engines*, we ſhall have reaſon to think, all Parties have an high eſteem of their *uſefulneſs*. Of theſe Calumnies there are too many ſorts and degrees to be here particulariz'd: And indeed thoſe, who permit themſelves to uſe any, can be ſuppos'd to have no other *boundaries* than the advantage of their *cauſe*: And accordingly as that ſeems to exact, they lay their *Scene*; ſometimes they traduce the perſons of their oppoſers, and by raiſing prejudices againſt them, hope ſome of it will reflect upon their doctrine: Did men generally know how to diſtinguiſh between *reports* and *certainties*, this *ſtratagem* would be as *unskilful* as it is *uningenuous*: But conſidering the vulgar temper, it's not unaptly ſuited to it. This it ſeems was anciently uuderſtood, it being the old Greek advice, θαῤῥοῦντας ἅπτεσθαι ϗ δάκνειν ταῖς διαβολαῖς ὅτι κἂν θεραπεύσῃ τὸ ἕλκος ὁ δεδηγμένος ἡ οὐλὴ μένει τῆς διαβολῆς. *To calumniate ſtoutly, for that how perfectly ſoever the wound of reproach be healed, there will remain a ſcar; and though we wipe away with never ſo much care the dirt thrown at us, there will be left ſome ſulliage behind:* And accordingly this was the Expedient the *Pagans* us'd againſt the *Primitive Chriſtians*, to put them thus in the skins of beaſts, and ſhapes of monſters, and then worry them to death. And this is the method ſtill, though heightned and improv'd; and our *Religion* has ſuffer'd infinitely more ſince we us'd it againſt *each other*, than when they manag'd it againſt the *whole community*. But beſides this *defamation* of Perſons, another branch of this black Art is the *depraving* of Writings, both in the ſence and very letter, and direct words; for the former of theſe, whoſoever obſerves the ſtrange perverſions, and affected miſtakes of mens meanings viſible in many of our *Polemick* Diſcourſes, will ſure reſolve that a Man's *intentions*, as well as his *words* and *actions* may be calumniated: Nor does the *letter* ſcape better, every period which threatens danger to the cauſe muſt be mutilated and diſmembred, and as *Sampſon* was by the *Philiſtines*, loſe its Hair and Eyes, and then be made ſport for the whole party. And I fear there are too few, who do not in this caſe take the *Jewiſh* reparation, an *Eye for an Eye*, &c. retaliate to the adverſary the foul play they receive. But ſome advance yet higher, and think it not enough to make an Argument or Teſtimony uſeleſs to the *Enemy*, unleſs they draw it over to *themſelves*, make it *betray* the ſide it was to *maintain*, and as a Conquerour uſes to reſtore Arms to ſuch of the adverſe party, as will turn to his, ſo after they have by ſatisfactions ſecur'd themſelves of its aid, it ſhall then be made as potent as is poſſible, and with ſuch kind of *Renegado troops* as theſe, ſome *cauſes* have been much ſupported. Yet were this *violation* offer'd

fer'd only to the writings of living Men, who might vindicate it, 'twere not ſo tranſcendently *ignoble*, but it moſt frequently falls upon thoſe, who have made their beds in the duſt; who have chang'd their own *Form*, and cannot ſecure their *Writings* from the ſame *fate:* Nay, 'tis yet more frequently *thoſe*, whom we have all reaſon to ſuppoſe, and moſt of us profeſs to believe, *glorified Saints:* and this ſuperadds a daring preſumption to all other circumſtances of the guilt, and heightens an injuſtice into Sacrilege. It has always been held the moſt deteſtable ſort of *forgery* to counterfeit *Teſtaments*, though the *Teſtator* were of never ſo low a quality, or his *bequeſts* of never ſo mean a value: And ſhall it now paſs for a piece of *commendable dexterity*, and art of manage to falſifie thoſe *writings* by which the Fathers of the Church deſign'd to entail *truth* and *piety*, not *ſtrife* and *faction* upon her? We know, *Necromancy* hath juſtly been reputed one of the moſt horrid forms of *Sorcery*, becauſe it enforced *dead* men to ſpeak what the living were inquiſitive to hear. I leave it to be conſider'd what this wants of that, beſides the dreadful *ceremonies* of the Incantation; certainly 'tis a guilt which nothing but our too familiar acquaintance with it could make unformidable. And indeed this whole method of ſerving a *cauſe* by ſuch *ſiniſter means* is ſo utterly repugnant to the Principles even of ingenuous nature, that we can ſcarce caſt a greater ſcandal upon an Opinion, than to ſhew it needs ſuch Aids. 'Tis by *Hiſtorians* branded as an execrable fact in him, who to ſecure himſelf from a *neighbouring Prince*, call'd the *Turk* into Chriſtendom: But ſure thoſe who to fortifie their ſide have brought in this Artifice of *calumniating* and *falſifying*, have done an Act no leſs *impious*; the conſtitution of Chriſtianity agreeing full as well with the *Alcoran* as with theſe *Piæ fraudes*; as ſome of them who perhaps mean the *fraud* more than the *Piety* are pleas'd to call them. Nay indeed they accord not much better with *Philoſophy* than *Divinity*, every man knows the nature of contraries is to combat and expel, not to cheriſh and ſupport one another. How abſurd is it then for thoſe, who ſay they deſign to advance *truth*, to make *falſhood* their Inſtrument? I wiſh they would experiment to accommodate their ſecular concerns at the ſame rate, let them *cool* them in the Fire, *warm* them in the Froſt, and *feed* themſelves by perpetual Faſting, and when they find cauſe to commend the efficacy of that Method, they may with fairer pretence in this higher inſtance reconcile the feuds of Reaſon and of Nature, and make a *lye* the Evidence of *Truth*. In the interim, it may well paſs for *Sophiſtry* as well as *ſin*; and doubtleſs whatever advantages are hop'd for to private Sects and Parties by this Art, Chriſtian Religion in general is hugely prejudiced by it: For when men ſhall compare the veracity of Heathens with our falſhoods; learn from *Hiſtorians*, that among the *Perſians*; αἴσχιστον τὸ ψεύδεσθαι νενόμισται, *to lye was deem'd a fault of the greateſt turpitude*, and they therefore laid an ill Character upon perſons in debt, ὅτι ἀνάγκη τὸν ὀφείλοντα καὶ τὸ ψεῦδος λέγειν, *becauſe he that is ſo muſt needs tell lyes:* And when they ſhall ſee in the Laws of *Cingis* a barbarous *Tartar*, Lying made a *capital crime*, and yet among Chriſtian *Caſuiſts* made a *holy artifice*, they will be tempted to think our *end* as fictitious as our *way*; and that our Religion has little countenance from *truth*, which is thus fain to make *lyes* its Refuge. Thus unhappily do theſe Arrows revert, not only on *thoſe* who ſhoot them, but in the face of *Chriſtianity* it ſelf, which is defam'd, and traduc'd by thoſe *ſlanders*, we aim at our *private adverſaries.*

2. *Upon evacuating the Law, and making void the Precepts of the Goſpel:*

3. But beſides this *direct*, there are other more *oblique* Ways of making *vice* ſubſervient to *Religion*, or to ſpeak more properly, of making *Religion*

ſubſervient to *vice*; for ſome Zealots of ſeveral parties, who more regard the *numerouſneſs* than *purity* of their Profeſſors, diſcerning how much the ſenſual part of mankind ſtartles at the ſtrictneſs of Goſpel-precepts, are induſtrious to take off that diſcouragement, not by convincing them of the real divine ſweetneſs and pleaſantneſs of them, but by debaſing and accommodating them more to the carnal appetite: Yet here men proceed not all alike, ſome uſe Chriſt's yoke, as *Hananiah* did that of *Jeremy*, break it quite off; others only eſſay to ſlacken and alleviate, that it may not pinch the luſts of *libertine Proſelytes:* Of the firſt ſort are ſuch, as having made the *adherence* to their Party the infallible mark of *Sanctification*, and that Sanctification of *Election*, do from thence proclaim to all who are ſo qualified a general Jubilee and Manumiſſion from the bond even of *Chriſt*'s as well as *Moſes*'s Law, or if ſome of them allow it to remain an impotent director, yet while they affirm that *God ſees no ſin in his Elect*, or if he do, beholds them as a Father does the harmleſs falls of his Child, rather with *ſmiles* than *anger*, they make the *violations* of it ſo ſafe, that they are too ſure to be many, and between abrogating and thus enervating a Law, the *difference* is merely verbal.

3. Upon ſlackening the ſeverity of its commands.

4. Of the ſecond ſort are ſome, who by indulgent and partial gloſſes, ſeek to mollifie the ſeverity of Chriſt's commands. That contrive for their Clients not the *means* of Obeying, but the *arts* of Eſcaping them. Like the *unjuſt Steward*, teach their Lord's Debtors to *write Fifty inſtead of a Hundred*; and decide Caſes of Conſcience more according to the *intereſts* and *paſſions* of Men, than the *will* of Chriſt. There are a generation of Men of whoſe Dexterity in this Faculty the world has taken ſo much notice that I need not name them, a ſort of eaſie *Caſuiſts* who ſeem to have erected a *Court of Equity* to relieve Men againſt the *rigour* of *divine Law*; and there is little doubt but they ſhall find enough ready to make ſuch *appeals:* Men love to be Chriſtians as cheap as they can, and therefore will cloſe with that party, which offers the eaſieſt terms: And then while theſe ſpiritual *Pioneers* do thus enlarge the narrow way, make it a road as well for the Beaſt as the Man, the *brutiſh ſenſual*, as well as *rational divine* Part of us, no wonder though Sholes of Converts throng in to them. But 'tis to be conſider'd that all this while this is winning Proſelytes to themſelves, not to God; the gaining them to a *Sect*, not a *Religion*; at leaſt not to that pure religion, and undefiled, which the grand Author of our Faith has both exemplified, and propos'd to us; for how much that ſuffers by this way of propugning private opinions, is more than enough apparent. Yet ſo ambitious are our prime Leaders of ſuch Trophies, that in order to them ſome are ſaid to aſcend yet a ſtep higher, and beſides this general encouragement they give to mens luſts by *taking off* Reſtraints, do in ſome caſes actually *promote* and *excite* them. For when they ſee a licentious perſon whoſe *acquiſt* they judge beneficial to their *cauſe*, they have artifices of fomenting his riots, do not only take off the *bridle*, but uſe the *ſpur* alſo, hoping that at the rebound it may conduce to their *End*. If any think it impoſſible it ſhould do ſo, let them conſider that among our various Opinions ſome there are which ſell Heaven much cheaper than others dare, that allow ſuch *eaſie atonements* as the moſt *habitual ſinner* need not deſpair of: And then the moſt infallible means to aſcertain ſuch to that ſide, is to make them too bad for any other. For when a man is reſolute to keep his *ſins* while he *lives*, and yet unwilling to relinquiſh all *hopes* when he *dies*, 'tis more than probable he will embrace that profeſſion which bids faireſt to the reconciling thoſe ſo diſtant intereſts; and therefore the *greater*

ter malefactor he is, the more ſure he will be *to fly to the horns of this Altar*; the nearer ſinking, the apter to catch at theſe reeds; ſo that the Project is not *impolitick*, though God knows ſo *impious*, that 'tis much fitter for the School of *Machiavel* than of *Chriſt*; and ſeems to verifie that imputation as to a part of Chriſtians, which *Julian* once as falſly as maliciouſly affixt upon the whole: That *their Church was an Aſylum and ſanctuary for the moſt flagitious offenders, and protected thoſe guilts to which no other religion allowed any Expiation.* 'Tis indeed ſo horrid that I cannot think there are many *conſciences* ſo cauteriz'd by this fiery *Zeal* as to admit it, yet that ſome have done it, there is too much certainty, and therefore 'tis no improper inſtance in our preſent argument; for if mens *eagerneſs* to ſupport their ſeveral ſides, can tranſport them to ſuch *attempts* as theſe, 'tis abundant Evidence how much Chriſtianity loſes by theſe conteſts of under-factions, which while they pretend to *guard*, do indeed *invade* her under her own Colours.

Some think that their great zeal will commute and make amends for their greater wickedneſs.

5. But beſides the faults men commit with this immediate *avow'd aſpect* upon their religion, there are others which ſlily ſhroud themſelves under the *skirt* of its *mantle*: I mean thoſe *Sins* of common life, which though they pretend not to advance the cauſe, yet when acted by a *Zealot* are thought to be overwhelm'd by his heroick *Piety*. Indeed men who make themſelves ſo much work about others *faith*, are ſeldom at leiſure to regulate their own *practice*, and ſo have no way of ſtating their accounts with God, but by balancing the *exceſs* of the one againſt the *defects* of the other: How ſuch reckonings will paſs the grand Audit, 'tis I think not hard to divine; but in the interim, it keeps them very chearful and ſecure, teaches them a Receipt to retain all their *Sins*, and yet loſe none of their *confidence*; ſo that when they have immerſt themſelves in all filthineſs both of Fleſh and Spirit, they can truſt their Zeal to refine them from all that Droſs. Nor does it only thus reconcile them to their own vices, but to other mens alſo, whoſe moſt brutiſh ſenſualities they can look on with perfect patience, nay even *Atheiſm* it ſelf can have *fair Quarter*: They are not much diſcompoſed to ſee men have *no Religion*, 'tis only the having *one different* from their own that awakes their indignation; then like *Saul* when ſeiz'd on by the *evil ſpirit*, they caſt about their Javelins, think no rigor too great on ſuch a provocation; yet even here they have intervals, and the very ſame perſons who are thus at odds upon a *religious*, can unite upon a *vicious* account. Thoſe who mutually denounce *damnation* to each other, can with full accord combine in thoſe *practices* which will aſcertain it to them both, as if they ſo much fear'd to have their *predictions* defeated, that they would be each others *convey* to the land of darkneſs. Thoſe that will by no means meet at the *Church*, know not when to part at the *Tavern*, and though they will not joyntly partake of the *Cup of the Lord*, are yet very ſociable at the *Cup of Devils*; I mean thoſe exceſſive debauches, which are a moſt acceptable drink-offering to thoſe infernal ſpirits. Have we not ſeen many whoſe diſtant opinions have faſtned upon one another the brand of *Antichriſtianiſm*, who have yet like *Gog* and *Magog* joyn'd againſt the holy City? And thoſe who could never agree on the way of ſetting up *Chriſt's Throne*, have yet been very unanimous in pulling down the *King's*. Thus alas, do we juſtle one another out of the *narrow path* that leads to life, but can hand in hand run our Career in the *broad way* of deſtruction. And doubtleſs this great unevenneſs, theſe ſpiritual feuds, and carnal endearments between the ſame perſons; this *impetuous zeal*, and as *impetuous luſts* in the ſame breaſts could never be, did not men depend ſo

confidently on the *one*, as to think it will commute, and ſatisfie for the *other*. But alas, how groundleſs a Preſumption this is, the whole tenour of the Goſpel does abundantly witneſs. In all that grand *Charter* where is there the leaſt clauſe importing ſuch an *immunity*? I am ſure there are multitudes that aſſert the contrary. Indeed the whole frame of the Evangelical Covenant is totally againſt it: That requiring an entire uniform Sanctity, and allowing no other *privilege* to the *ſins* of the moſt knowing Profeſſors, but a *preheminence* in *puniſhment*, the being beaten with many *ſtripes*. And when 'tis conſidered that the *end* of all Religion is but the drawing us to a *conformity* with God, the impreſſing on us ſome Character of his eternal goodneſs and holineſs, 'twill be as abſurd as impious to believe that our *zeal* to any Religion can abſolve us from that purity which is the end and deſign of all. And while this is the way Men take to approve their Piety, 'tis no marvel to find ſo *many* Chriſtians, and ſo *little* Chriſtianity in the World: For that is not to be eſtimated by the *number of* its Profeſſors, but by their *obedience* to its Rules, and he that gives up his *name* to it and not his *heart*, will receive as little *advantage* by it, as he brings *honour* to it, and how little that is in reſpect of its internal Efficacy, is I preſume competently evidenced.

Our Diviſions are prejudicial to the progreſs of the Goſpel, by hindring the converſion of its enemies.

6. But that we may more throughly diſcern how univerſally deſtructive our *wranglings* are to it, in all its *concerns*, let us a little examine whether they do not endamage it even in reſpect of *outward profeſſion* alſo. This may ſeem a ſtrange Query to thoſe who think their *diſputes* about Religion are to denominate them the great *confeſſors* of the Age: Yet certainly there is but too much ground not only for the *enquiry*, but to reſolve it in the *affirmative*. And if it prove ſo, 'twill infer but ſadly to thoſe who having laid the whole ſtreſs of their Hopes upon their zeal to advance their Faith will be found to have *pull'd down* more than they have *built up*. Now Chriſtianity may in reſpect of Profeſſion decay two ways, either in its *hopes*, or in its *poſſeſſion*, the one in relation to *Aliens*, the other to *Diſciples*. The firſt by hindering the acceſs of *new* Converts, the ſecond by ſtaggering or alienating the *old*, and both theſe ways ſhe viſibly appears to ſuffer by our diviſions. And firſt, if we conſult but our experience, if we truſt but our own obſervations, we cannot but confeſs that the Goſpel has long been at a great ſtand: That that *Sun* which at its firſt ariſing was like *David*'s, *Pſal.* 19 ſurrounded the world in a vigorous efficacious motion, is ſince become like *Joſhua*'s, *Joſh.* 10. 12. arreſted in its courſe: Nay like *Hezekiah*'s gone backward, *Iſa.* 38.8. *Mahumetiſm* (if not *Paganiſm*) having long taken up its ſeat in divers of the moſt flouriſhing Apoſtolick Plantations. A ſad change, that from the daily and numerous acceſſion of the firſt times, it ſhould now become a kind of *Prodigy*, a piece of *news*, ſcarce heard in an Age, that one ſingle *Proſelyte* is gain'd to the *Church*; yet that thus it is, is too obvious to be deny'd. And truly it is not much leſs apparent that our diſſentions have in a great degree contributed to it. For firſt, as to the *extirpation* of the Eaſtern Churches, he that ſhall examine the records of thoſe times, will have cauſe to ſay, their Jangling and Diviſions were not only in a *moral* or *divine*, but even in a *proper natural ſence*, the Inſtruments of it. The *Turk* only coming in at thoſe breaches which themſelves had made, nor had their *Candleſtick* probably been removed, had they not firſt abus'd its *light*, to the ſetting themſelves in *Combuſtion*. That the ſame *cauſe* has not yet had the ſame *effect* among us, is owing not to its *unaptneſs* to produce it, but to the admirable *patience* and *mercy* of God who yet withholds that fatal Judgment, which we do our parts to

pull upon our ſelves; our mutual violences againſt one another herein unhappily combining and making one united force againſt us all. But though the *divine goodneſs* hath hitherto ſo countermined our *treachery* to our ſelves, as not to ſuffer us to enjoy that ſtate of darkneſs we have ſo courted, yet certainly our *contentions* are extremely acceſſary to the continuing it upon others, our many *new* and *wandring lights*, however they fail of having that Property of the *Pillar of fire*, *Exod.* 14. of illuminating and conducting the *Iſraelites*, yet too much anſwer its other, in becoming a *cloud* and *darkneſs* to the *Ægyptians*; there being ſcarce any thing more apt to intercept the beams of the Sun of righteouſneſs from the Heathen World, every of thoſe *little encloſures* our Factions have made in the Church, becoming a *great partition wall* to keep others out of it. This may be made evident in ſeveral reſpects. As firſt, in relation to thoſe many *moral obliquities* in which our eager diſputes do (as hath already been ſhewed) betray us, which cannot but give ſo much *ſcandal* to any conſidering Man, that we can ſcarce hope any can turn to us as to a better Religion, but will rather think it the way to relinquiſh all; to obliterate thoſe *native impreſſions* of Piety and Honeſty they brought with them into the World, ſo that if we expect any *Proſelytes*, it muſt be only ſuch as would live *worſe* than mere *nature* allows them.

Our differences at home make us backward in propagating the Goſpel abroad amongſt Infidels;

7. But this though as important a conſideration as can well be, I ſhall not here inſiſt on, having in the ſecond Section given ſome inſtances how apt our *Morality* is to defame our *Divinity*, and confirm men in Oppoſition to it. But though this be a *great*, yet 'tis not the *only* means by which our Diſſentions hinder the progreſs of the Goſpel, for they do not only make *Infidels* leſs inclinable to receive it, but *us* to propagate it. Thoſe do ſo buſie and engroſs us, that there is neither leiſure nor heart left for this. Our *activeſt ſpirits* are ſo engaged at home in aſſerting their *private quarrels*, that all ſuch *foreign* deſigns are forgot. For as in *Civil*, ſo in *Eccleſiaſtical* concerns, every one is more induſtrious to advance his *peculiar* intereſt than that of the *community*, accordingly we find innumerable promulgers of every new Opinion. No *Sect* wants its *Apoſtles* to propagate and diffuſe it; but where are there any that have the like care for the main *Root* of Chriſtian Religion, which they have for theſe little *Twigs* and *Off-ſets* which they have planted in their own Gardens; how many Ages muſt we look back to find a Man that has made it his buſineſs to convert *Infidels* to the Faith? 'Tis true indeed there are ſome very magnificent relations of *modern attempts* this way, of great induſtry ſome have us'd to bring the moſt ſavage Nations to the obedience of Chriſt: But if we examine, 'twill be obvious, the main deſign was to ſubject them to themſelves. 'Twas not ſo much their *Heatheniſm* as their *territories* they invaded, and ſuch *Apoſtles* as theſe are ill qualified to make S. *Paul*'s profeſſion, 2 *Cor.* 12. 16. *I ſeek not yours but you.* And the ſucceſs of ſuch Eſſays have been anſwerable to the motive; they have won *riches* but not *Souls*. The *Goſpel* in one hand and a *ſword* in the other has made many *ſlaves*, but I fear few *Chriſtians*. Indeed, what encouragement had thoſe poor creatures to receive a Religion from their Oppreſſors? Why ſhould they think that thoſe who tortur'd and kill'd their *bodies*, were really concern'd to ſave their *Souls*? or that thoſe who would not permit them to enjoy what was their own, meant to help them to any thing better? And while the *felicities* of another world were recommended to them only by *ſuch*, as had deprived them of all in *this*, we cannot wonder at their *little appetite* to embrace them; or to find the oppreſt *Indians* proteſt againſt that heaven where the *Spaniards* are

to be their co-habitants. In ſhort, this is ſure ſuch a method of *Evangelizing*, as too widely differs from that which firſt planted the *Church*, to be likely to advance its *growth:* So that notwithſtanding all pretences of this kind, we may reſume our aſſertion, and conclude that our *inteſtine diſcords* (perhaps not thoſe alone) have diverted the *Zeal* of this more Chriſtian undertaking, and left a great part of the world under that invincible Ignorance S. *Paul* mentions, *Rom.* 10. 14. *How ſhall they call on him, in whom they have not believed, and how ſhall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard*; *and how ſhall they hear without a preacher?* And God knows whether we have not herein provided better for their Excuſe than our own.

and doth prejudice them againſt theſe doctrines we cannot our ſelves agree upon,

8. There is yet another way by which our *diviſions* impede their *converſion*, and that is by giving them *prejudice* to that Doctrine about which our ſelves cannot agree. 'Tis an univerſal Maxim that *Truth is always conſonant to it ſelf*; and therefore where they ſee ſo little *unity*, they have too much *temptation* to doubt of Truth. He that wandring ſhould meet a Company that offer to conduct him to his journeys end, might reaſonably incline to deliver himſelf up to their *guidance*; but if he find them unagreed upon the way, one Diſputing for this, and another for that, and every one proteſting againſt all but his own; he would ſure retract his *confidence*, and think they offer'd him only more variety of miſtakes, reſolve it as ſafe to truſt himſelf to his *own* Errors as *other mens*. And this alas, ſeems to be too exact a parallel of the preſent caſe; we Chriſtians do ſo mutually damn one another, that a poor *Turk* or *Heathen* will think, he rather *multiplies* than *ends* his Danger by aſſociating himſelf with us; for there being ſo many parties, which ſoever he joyns himſelf to, there will be abundant odds againſt him; ſo that if he could be ſecur'd the truth were among us, yet the great difficulty of finding it out, would be a very diſheartning conſideration. Beſides, Men love in *tranſactions* of great Importance to have as *many* and as *credible Vouchers* as may be, and upon that ſcore 'twill ſure be but a cold inducement to any to turn *Chriſtian*, to foreſee, that when he has done ſo, he ſhall be *diſown'd* by far the greater part of that number, and that at his entrance into the *Church*, he ſhall be met with almoſt as many *Anathema*'s, as when he was an *Infidel*. Nay, I ſcarce know whether I may call it an entrance into the *Church*, or rather into a *Conventicle*, or *particular Congregation*, our Schiſms and Separations having hardly left a poſſibility of *external Communion* with the *Univerſal Church*, ſince the Communicating with one part of it, does infallibly Excommunicate from another. Thus have we placed our *flaming Sword* (though God knows no *Cherubim*) at the gate of our Paradiſe, and when God calls all men to the *waters of life*, our Contentions have made them like *thoſe of Marah*, ſo bitter and unpleaſant, as deters and averts men from them: which as it is in the higheſt degree injurious to them, ſo is it contumelious to *him*, whoſe invitations are by this means fruſtrated; 'tis in ſome degree the evacuating one of the main *purpoſes* of Chriſt's coming into the World, which was to *call men out of darkneſs into his marvellous light*; and as *He* was thus ſent by his Father, ſo alſo were the *Apoſtles* ſolemnly commiſſionated by him to preach to the Gentile World, who with indefatigable induſtry and reſolute ſufferings purſued the *charge*; and ſure this is competent evidence, that the deſign was of the greateſt and moſt weighty importance, and ſuch as can never be out-dated, till there ceaſe to be objects of it, unbelievers to convert: And by that let us meaſure the guilt of obſtructing it, which if we would impartially

do, I aſſure my ſelf the moſt *paſſionate Bigot* of any Party muſt confeſs, that it infinitely out-weighs all the Piety his doctrine can pretend to, that his *peculiar* Church gains not ſo much as the *Catholick* loſes: And that how confidently ſoever he hath Canoniz'd his quarrels, they are indeed but the worſt ſort of Heathens, and ſerve to keep out the better.

and ſtagger the Faith of its old Profeſſors.

Yet beſides the miſchief they do in relation to thoſe that are *without*, they are extremely pernicious to thoſe that are *within*, and that not only to ſome *one Sect*, but like an *univerſal poiſon*, that is equally deadly to the moſt contrary complexions, they operate on the moſt diſtant ranks of Profeſſors, the *tender* and the *obdurate*, the *ſcrupulous* and the *profane*. And firſt for the tender tremulous Chriſtian, 'tis eaſie to diſcern how much he muſt be diſtracted and amaz'd by them; for while he hears each Sect thunder out *Damnation* againſt each other, he cannot but be ſtartled at the *danger* of adhering to the *wrong*, and though that may a-while excite his diligence to diſcover the *right*, yet when he comes to that inquiſition, he will meet with ſo many *Polemick intricacies* to entangle him, that after many turns, firſt to one ſide, and then to another, he will be apt to think the only *clue* to extricate him out of this *labyrinth* of many Religions, *is to abandon all*. Nor is this *mere Speculation* and *Conjecture*, God knows we have had ſucceſſively through the whole round of Error too many *practick experiments* of it. Several Perſons there have been, whoſe Zeal to find out *truth* by an unhappy rule of *Falſe*, directed them to allow of *every Error*: While like *ſick men*, who deſire to die good-cheap, they put themſelves into the hands of any *Empyrick*, follow each bold pretender, that has the impudence to talk of Truth, till Superſtition ends in Profanation, *Godlineſs* proves *Atheiſm*, and by having been of *many Sects*, at laſt have *no Religion*. And ſurely this is a moſt unhappy effect of our diſcords, thus to be *ſtumbling blocks* in our brother's way, and when we remember the woes pronounc'd againſt thoſe that ſhall Scandalize any of the little ones, 'twill be ſtrange how men can think to approve their *Chriſtianity*, by the ruine of their Brothers, or ſecure themſelves of *Heaven* by keeping others thence: For though Chriſt tells his Diſciples there ſhould be ſome that ſhould think it a *ſervice* to God *to kill their Bodies*, yet to fancy the *deſtroying of Souls* ſo too, is a Deception of which we have neither *record* nor *prediction* in Holy Writ, and is a ſuperfœtation of the ſpirit of deluſion, peculiar to thoſe who have placed their own ſanctity in theſe religious wranglings which ſerve to deſtroy it in other men.

and tempts bad men to doubt of, and bid defiance to all Religion.

And as they thus ſerve on the one ſide to ſhipwrack the *faith* of theſe weak unſtable Souls; ſo do they on the other advance the *impiety* of the daring ſinner; for as they are Temptation to the *one*, ſo are they Pretence and Excuſe to the *other* to bid defiance to all Religion. He whoſe diſſolute *affections* have ſo long been courting his *underſtanding* to turn Atheiſt, will ſure not loſe the advantage of ſo plauſible an argument as our *diviſions* afford him; and ſince his *luſts* engage him in an irreconcileable War againſt the *practick part* of Piety, he will moſt gladly embrace this occaſion of quarrel againſt the *Theory* alſo: So making himſelf entire, and extinguiſhing thoſe uneaſie regrets and miſgivings ariſing from the repugnancy of his *life* to his *belief*. It were not hard to give a *compendium* of theſe mens *Logick*, and draw out thoſe *Schemes* of Diſcourſe, by which from our *differences* in Religion they infer the *diſcarding* of all. But I fear theſe are already too well known, and where they are not, I ſhould be loth to be any man's Inſtructor. This is I am ſure too palpable, that how *fallacious* ſoever theſe Reaſonings are, they have been very *operative*, as appears by the number of thoſe *avowed*

Atheiſts among us, who placing themſelves *in the ſeat of the ſcorner*, give themſelves much pleaſing Divertiſement, by *deriding* our eager *ſcuffles* about that which they think nothing. If any man thinks that the *Church* is no loſer by the defection of ſuch *Libertines*, I muſt be allowed to diſſent from him: For firſt, there are examples of the moſt vicious Perſons, that have been reduced, and while they retain their Chriſtian *belief*, that lays ſuch undeniable obligations to good *life*, that whenever they reſume their *reaſon*, they muſt take up *vertue* alſo with it; ſo that there is an equal poſſibility of their being *good*, that there is of their being *rational*: But when all hope and fear of a future eſtate is diſclaim'd, when thoſe cords are broken, which ſhould pull them up from the Dungeon, then, and not before is their ſtate viſibly deſperate. But beſides this poſſibility of *recovering them*, the danger of *loſing others* is to be conſidered. Bold *Atheiſm* is like a raging *Peſtilence*, which taints the very *Air*, ſo that thoſe impious *diſcourſings* which are the *effects* of ſome mens Vices, may be the *cauſe* of others; and we too often ſee that thoſe who aſcended themſelves *by degrees*, do *in an inſtant* advance their *Proſelytes* to the height of Irreligion, as appears by the ſtrange proficiency of ſome, whoſe Years allow them not to have arrived to it otherwiſe than *per Saltum*. And ſure this ſpreading Contagion has been ſo deſtructive to the Church, that it were to be wiſht, the mere titular Chriſtians had rather remain'd ſuch, than thus to have averted others from being ſo much.

In propagating our particular Sects and Opinions we expoſe Chriſtianity in general.

9. And now if all theſe ſcandals be worth our regret, if the emboldening and exaſperating the *bad*, the corrupting the *innocent*, and the decay of Chriſtian *profeſſion* conſequent to both, be *formidable Evils*, we know where to charge the *guilt*. Our *contentions* muſt be arraign'd as *acceſſaries* if not *principals* in the caſe: And then ſure it will befit our angry Zealots to conſider, whether this be the way of *advancing God's Truth*, or *what account they will give to the Lord of the Vineyard*, who while they pretend to dreſs and prune the *branches*, do thus debilitate and deſtroy the *roots*. Nay, indeed in this they are treacherous even to their own pretenſions, for all thoſe ſeveral religions which they ſo tenderly cheriſh, have no *proper root* of their own, but like Excreſcencies, ſpring out of the *main ſtock* of Chriſtianity, live by its juice and moiſture, and conſequently, can never hope to ſurvive it. And then certainly there can be nothing more ridiculous than to expreſs their kindneſs to the *one*, by ways that are ſo ruinous to the *other*. 'Tis as if a *Paſſenger* in a ſhip ſhould, to fortifie his *private Cabin*, tear up the *planks* and expoſe the whole Veſſel to ſinking: Yet thus prepoſterouſly do many of our *chief Pilots* apply their care. In the mean time, it cannot but be a very *delightful proſpect* to the grand Enemy of Souls, to ſee us thus buſily promote his *intereſt*, lay *ſnares* for our ſelves, and by our own *folly* do that which all his *ſubtilties* could never compaſs. Nor can we think but he will be as *officious* to us as is poſſible, while we are thus employed, will help us to contrive our *Turrets*, whilſt he ſees we pluck our *ſtones* from the *foundation* to build them with; nor ſhall we ever want *new models* of Churches, ſo long as they thus help to deſtroy the *old*; and how aptly they are fitted for that purpoſe, needs (I ſuppoſe) no farther Demonſtration.

CHAP. XII.

A Survey of the Miſchiefs ariſing from Diſputes, in reference to Civil Peace.

Our Contentions are very injurious to our civil peace:

1 They diſturb the peace of Families:

1. AND now ſure we cannot but conclude our *Contentions* highly injurious to *Chriſtianity*, that thus aſſault it both in the *Practick* and *Theory:* And indeed how fierce ſoever our quarrels are with one another, the heavieſt blows are ſure to fall on that, which as in its conſtitution is of the moſt Pacifick temper imaginable, ſo it has the common fate of reconcilers to ſuffer from all parties. But *Godlineſs having the promiſe as well of this life as of that which is to come*, it often happens that there is ſuch a conſent between our *ſpiritual* and *ſecular* Concerns, that the Miſchiefs that oppreſs the *one* do reflect on the *other:* And indeed Religion when intire and united, is one of the beſt bonds of *Civil* as well as *Eccleſiaſtical* Peace, (as even thoſe atteſt, who defying all other ends of it, do yet admit it a uſeful State-engine;) from whence 'tis conſequent, that the *diſtractions* and *diviſions* in that muſt have proportionably a contrary influence, and infect *communities* with Diſcord, Tumult and Diſorders. And this is an *effect* with which I think not unfit to bring up the *rear* of the foregoing Miſchiefs, it being not ſo purely Secular, as not to ſuit our preſent ſubject; for *outward order* and *unity* can never be ſo innocently diſturb'd, but that *Chriſtianity* muſt be wounded in it alſo: And beſides, it may perhaps obtain more conſideration than the former, as being of a nature wherein the generality of Men will think themſelves the moſt concern'd; for though there be many that can look on the ruine both of Chriſtian Practice and Profeſſion, with *Gallio*'s indifference, *Acts* 18. 17. and care for none of thoſe things, yet when the ſiege draws cloſer, when they find themſelves begirt in their worldly intereſts, and that the ſame Deluge that overwhelms *Churches*, may bear down *Palaces* alſo, perhaps they may think the matter not ſo contemptible. And firſt, as to the truth of the obſervation, the *World* has too long groaned under the *Experiment* to need farther proof. That *bitterneſs* which firſt tainted the *waters of the Sanctuary*, hath from thence diffus'd it ſelf into our *common ſtreams*, and like the *Ægyptian Plague*, left none uncorrupted: For whether we look upon Families, Neighbourhoods, Kingdoms, any the *leaſt*, or any the *greateſt* Societies, we find the miſerable *Trophies* of our *holy Wars*, in Factions and Confuſions; I would I could not ſay Rapine and Blood alſo. For the *firſt* of theſe, the domeſtick Jars caus'd by different Opinions, the *Inſtances* are numerous, or rather innumerable, which our *own age* and *nation* afford us. How many Servants have on this ſcore been at defiance with their Maſters? Children with their Parents? Nay, Wives with their Husbands? Such an unhappy force is there in *miſtaken Zeal*, that it diſſolves the *cloſeſt bonds*, violates all *obligations* natural or civil, while under pretence of ſervice to God, like the *Phariſee*'s Corban, it evacuates all duty to Man; and this has made ſuch ruptures and diviſions in Families, that that delightful proſpect the *Pſalmiſt* ſo much commends, That of *Brethrens dwelling together in unity*, *Pſalm* 133. is ſcarce any where to be met with; but inſtead of that, ſuch rancour and bitterneſs, treachery and malice, as if men either miſtook Chriſt's *prediction*, *Luke* 12. 52. for a *precept*, or at leaſt were willing to advance his *Prophetick* Office upon the ruine of his *Kingly*, and to verifie his *preſage* by breaking his *command*. And as the Oeconomical order and peace is thus diſturb'd, ſo if he that miſſes quiet *at home* ſhould ſeek for it *abroad*, he

2. They diſturb the peace of Cities and Corporations:

will ſoon find himſelf diſappointed, and diſcern that as the *ſocieties* grow greater, ſo do the *diſorders* alſo, and that private ſtrifes do as much combine to make *parties* and *factions*, as families do to make *Cities* and *Corporations*. By this means that mutual communication, by which the Members of civil bodies ſhould not only benefit one another, but ſecure the whole is interrupted, and Men live not as *neighbours*, but *ſpies*, always upon deſigns of Entrapping and Enſnaring; for while they look on one another as *enemies to God*, they think that reſcinds all obligations of *friendſhip among themſelves*; and when Religion bears the *Standard*, the *War* will be concluded neceſſary and honourable. But though it be ſo in *imagination only*, 'tis ſure there are ſome, who make it *really profitable*; for as in moſt *Camps*, the greater number are attracted rather by hope of *booty* than concern for the *cauſe*; ſo here, many Men *liſt* themſelves under one Party, that they may have pretence to *prey* upon the reſt. And to that End ſeveral very commodious *Axioms* have been taken up: As that *No faith is to be kept with Hereticks*; that *Dominion is founded in Grace*, &c. By ſuch meaſures as theſe the goods of the *Ægyptians* become lawful prizes to any, that pleaſe to call themſelves *Iſraelites*; and indeed *Jews* they may be call'd in that notion we vulgarly uſe it of *unjuſt* and *cruel extortioner:* But ſure not ſuch *Iſraelites* as Chriſt defines *Nathanael, John* 1. 47. *without guile:* For having thus conſecrated their frauds, and found an Expedient of ſerving *God* and *Mammon* together, there is no piece of *deceit* either too big, or too little for them; no tranſaction is ſo important, which can oblige their *fidelity*; none ſo trivial as to diſcourage their *rapin:* Opportunity is the only meaſure and rule of their attempts, by this means no *Obligation* of Contract, no *Laws* of Commerce can eſcape unviolated; every thing is lawful that may weaken the wicked, and that *Zeal* which makes Men *Saints* in the Church or Conventicle, can make them *Thieves* in the Shop or Market. Thus is Piety made an Engine of rapine, and by theſe *religious riots*, all *boundaries* wherewith Laws or Equity have fenc'd mens diſtinct *properties*, are thrown down: And ſure this is a moſt carnal conſequent of our ſpiritual debates, and bids fair towards the reducing us to that ſtate of common Hoſtility, which ſome have fancied to be the *Original condition* of mankind: For it renders commerce ſo dangerous, that Men may within a while think it ſafer to truſt their own *ſtrengths*, than to the ſhelter of thoſe *Laws* and *Civil compacts*, which they ſee ſo avowedly evacuated. And upon this account, though the Injury be immediately done to *private* perſons, it becomes a *publick* miſchief. Yet alas, theſe are but the more moderate *effects* of our Diſſentions; they afford more expedite and compendious ways of publick ruine; the *defrauding* or *undermining* of a few Neighbours, are *petty prizes* for thoſe that think they have the ſole right to the Creature, and are thoſe *Meek* who are to *inherit the Earth*, and every ſuch acquiſt only ſerves to fleſh them for a farther chaſe. The *ſpoils* of a broken Kingdom will afford ſomething worth the *ſcrambling* for: And nothing more fit to *break* it than a pretence of Religion, which like the *ſtone* that ſmote *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Image, has ſhiver'd the moſt goodly Monarchies. And accordingly, we ſee no *Engine* is more conſtantly us'd by Men of Seditious Spirits, to diſturb and ſubvert Governments: Indeed there can be nothing ſo advantageouſly fitted for the purpoſe. For ſhould ſuch perſons unmask their *deſign*, and ſhew it in its *native uglineſs*, ſhould they avow the ſhaking of a *Kingdom* merely to eſtabliſh themſelves in a condition of *wealth* and *grandeur*, the new moulding of a Government, only that they might ſhape their own ſhares in it, 'twere impoſſible they ſhould

3. They diſturb the peace of whole Kingdoms and Provinces.

ſhould find any abettors; for though the *multitude* are always in preparation for *change*, yet 'tis not on Intuition of benefit to ſome *private perſons*, but of ſomewhat wherein *themſelves* may partake: Nor is even the madneſs of the people mad enough, to expoſe all their *own intereſt*, and moſt important concerns only to promote *thoſe of others.* It has therefore always been both the rule and practice for ſuch deſigners to ſuborn the *publick intereſt* to countenance and cover their *private*; to cry up *Diana* to ſecure their own *gain*, and to make the ſeduced *Populacy* like the *Jackal* to the *Lion*, hunt that prey which themſelves mean to devour. And of all thoſe artifices by which ſuch *Incendiaries* have ſet Kingdoms in a *flame*, none has been more univerſally ſucceſsful than the *pretext* of Religion, which is thought ſo *creditable a cauſe* to engage in, as can convert the *infamous titles* of Rebel and Traitor into thoſe of Patriot and *Saint*, and conſequently, take off all diſcouragement ariſing from the diſreputation of ſuch an enterprize: And no leſs potent is it in ſolving the ſcruples of its unlawfulneſs; for by a dexterous anticipation, it makes Conſcience a *party*, that it may exclude it from being *judge*, and by that only fallacy of ſuppoſing *Religion* to be a *juſt ground of quarrel*, makes way for all the wild conſequences deducible from that *falſe principle*: And indeed where that is throughly faſtned, the *miſchiefs* are not only *great* but *incurable*, and yet the more ſo by how much the perſon is more zealous. For alas, what will it avail to tell ſuch a Man, 'tis a ſin to *fight againſt his King*: when he will tell you 'tis a greater not to *fight for his God*: That he contracts a *heinous guilt* in violating the *peace* of the Church, when he with as great confidence believes he *merits* in propagating its *truth*. That he is accountable for the *blood* of his Brethren; when he thinks he has like the *Levites*, *Exod.* 32. conſecrated himſelf in it, and offer'd it an acceptable *ſacrifice* to God. Thus unhappily are theſe Men fortified in their *ſin*, by preſuming it their *Vertue*, and while the *furious zeal* of ſuch is made ſubſervient to the *wicked craft* of others, 'tis a moſt *apt inſtrument* of publick Miſchief, there being no attempt ſo deſperate, which ſuch may not be put upon, who are methinks us'd, as *Hannibal* is ſaid to have done thoſe Oxen, whoſe *horns* he firſt fired, and then ſent them to diſturb the *Roman* Camp: Theſe *men* as thoſe *beaſts* are found very uſeful for the moleſting of others; but commonly all they acquire to themſelves, is the *ſmart* of their own *flames*. Few of thoſe who thus in the ſimplicity of their heart follow an *Abſalom* or a *Sheba*, that do not either miſcarry together with the *deſign*, or elſe live to diſcern how much their *credulity* was abuſed; and that both *religion* (however pretended) and *thoſe* that fought for it, were only made *properties* to promote the *luſts of thoſe* who deſpiſed both. But 'tis unneceſſary to inſiſt farther on the *effects* of ſuch religious Fury, of which *we of this Nation* have had ſo many and ſo *coſtly evidences*, as far tranſcend the moſt *tragical deſcriptions.* God grant we may never have other than our *paſt experiences* to meaſure them by: But certainly there is little reaſon to be ſecure, ſo long as the *root* of them, our *ſpeculative differences* daily encreaſe; for unleſs we could ſuppoſe an Age of ſuch innocence, that there ſhould be none who would *take* any undue Advantages, 'tis ſure there will be enough *given*: And indeed when we reflect upon our paſt Diſtractions, and conſider how trivial the *matter* of moſt of thoſe debates was, whoſe *manner* has been ſo cruelly ſolemn; how our ſlighteſt *problems* have been writ in *blood*, that many Thouſands have been made *naked* to keep the *Surplice off* a few mens backs, and we have pulled down our *Churches* in diſpleaſure at the *Windows*; when I ſay theſe and a Thouſand the like are conſidered, we muſt conclude that there can never *want* Occaſion to them that (in the *Apoſtle's* Phraſe) *deſire* Occaſion: The *lighteſt diſtempers* in the Church being *contagious*, and moſt apt (when fomented by ambitious deſigners) to beget an *univerſal Plague* in the common wealth. And now who can without horror conſider theſe miſerably perverted *effects* of Chriſtian Religion, that *that* which was deſign'd the moſt *inviolable bond of unity*, ſhould like thoſe curles of entangled Snakes with which *Erinnys* is ſaid to have infuriated *Athamas* and *Ino*, become the *fatal incendiary of the mortalleſt hatred.* That *that Oeconomy* which was meant to *regulate*, ſhould be the Inſtrument of *confounding* and *embroiling* the World; and a *Goſpel of Peace* ſhould thus be made the *Incentive to war*, and create fiercer quarrels than thoſe it was to have compos'd. *To turn the Grace of God into wantonneſs*, is juſtly branded as a *great* Crime, but ſure to turn it *into malice* is yet a *greater*. And though every ſin offers violence to our religion, yet *this* is of all others the moſt *barbarous*, thus to make it aſſaſſinate it ſelf, become a kind of *Felo de ſe*, and contribute to its own ruine. And that this is the caſe, is I preſume ſufficiently evident in all the *foregoing inſtances*, which as they are moſt obviouſly the *effect* of our eager Diſputes, ſo are they no leſs viſibly *deſtructive* to Chriſtianity in all its intereſts, leave it neither *root* nor *branch*, neither *inward* Vigor, nor *outward* Luſtre; ſo at once rendring it both infertile and unamiable. 'Twas a piece of hoſtile Severity againſt *Moab*, to *fill the land with ſtones, thereby to render it barren*, 2 *Kings* 3. 25. The ſlingers went about, and ſmote it: But what *that* ſuffered from *profeſt Enemies*, the *Church* daily ſuſtains from thoſe that call themſelves her beſt *friends*. Our *Benjamites* are ſo in love with their skill of ſlinging to a hairs breadth, their nice Criticiſms, Diſtinctions and Subtilties, have caſt abroad ſo many *ſtones of contention*, that the Church is become a perfect *Quarry*, utterly *ſteril* and *unfruitful*, as to all thoſe good works for the production whereof ſhe was ſo peculiarly fenced and cultivated by God; nay, 'twere well if *barrenneſs* were the worſt, and that ſhe had not on the other ſide acquir'd an unhappy *degenerous fertility*: But what a numerous and accurſed Iſſue ſpring from this unpeaceable temper, the foregoing conſiderations do too ſadly demonſtrate; and I doubt not every attentive Obſerver will be able to add *more* (though not *truer*) Inſtances; and beſides to diſcern that this *ſpurious brood* like that of *Hagar*, is grown ſo wantonly inſolent, as to deſpiſe the *right heir* of the Promiſe. The true *Goſpel Graces* of Meekneſs, Peaceableneſs and univerſal Charity are accounted *Earthly Phlegmatick qualities*, we diſclaim that *Holy Ghoſt* which deſcends in the appearance of the *Dove*, nay, or in *fire* either, unleſs it be like that of *Elijah*, to conſume all that diſguſt us; nor do we meaſure our *Religion* ſo much, by the oppoſition it makes to our *luſts*, as to thoſe whom we firſt make, and then call our *Enemies*. Thus miſerably have we chang'd the Scene, and by *calling evil good, and good evil*, have accumulated injuries upon our oppreſſed Chriſtianity, not only robb'd it of its *rule*, but of its *reputation* alſo. And do we daily thus ſee *Iſhmael* mocking *Iſacc*, and ſhall we not think it time to caſt out the Bond-woman and her Son? Shall we for ever cheriſh this generation of *Vipers* to tear out the *bowels* of our common Mother? I pray God the Queſtion have not as much of *preſage* as *expoſtulation*. For if we conſider the preſent ſtate of things; how our *contentions* plead not only *right* but *preſcription*, there ſeems not much hope of diſpoſſeſſing them, and yet leſs, when 'tis remembred, how they have entwiſted themſelves, not only with the *paſſions*, but *intereſts* of men; two ſuch *potent Abettors* as will buoy up the moſt *forlorn cauſe*. The truth is, there are many *ſubterraneous Springs* which feed *this Ocean*, and though religion and piety be on all hands demurely pretended, yet as we have ſeen the *effects* of our debates very *diſconſonant* to ſuch a Profeſſion; ſo if we examine the *originals* and *cauſes*, we ſhall find them for the moſt part as *widely diſtant*. It may not be amiſs to take a ſhort view of ſome of them; for though I cannot hope the *diſcovery* of the Cauſes will contribute to the *general cure*, yet perhaps it may prove an *Antidote* to ſome particular perſons, who will be the leſs apt to admire the verdure of the *leaves* (the flouriſhing appearances of *zeal* and *piety*) when they find both *fruit* and *root* of ſo poiſonous a quality.

CHAP. XIII.

A Survey of the Cauſes of Diſputes; and firſt Pride.

One great Cauſe of our Contentions and Diſputes is Pride.

1. AND in this inqueſt we find Pride already arraigned to our hands, by the wiſeſt of Men, *Prov.* 13. 10. *Only by pride cometh contention.* It is indeed a moſt prolifick vice, and there are few *ſins* to which it is not either a *parent* or *nurſe*: But there is ſcarce any that does more betray its immediate deſcent from it than this of *ſtrife* and *debate*, which has ſo many of the *lineaments* and *features* of the deform'd Mother, as ſufficiently atteſts its *extraction*. And as this is true of *all* ſtrifes in general, ſo particularly of *thoſe* whereof we now treat: For Pride being it ſelf an internal ſin, it has ſuch a neighbourhood with all the notions and ſpeculations of the mind, that it eaſily makes impreſſions on them: Nor are we to wonder that the Sacredneſs of divine things is not *Amulet* enough againſt its *Charms*, when we remember that the *firſt act* of Pride that ever was committed, was levelled even *at God* himſelf; and as it took up its firſt ſeat in a ſpiritual ſubſtance, ſo has it ever ſince, never acted more *naturally*, and therefore more *vigorouſly*, than about ſpiritual matters. Of this the Church in all Ages has had many coſtly Experiments; for if we trace the Catalogues of Hereſies from Simon Magus his days down to our own, we ſhall find Pride a *principal Actor* in every *Scene*, though perhaps in *various dreſſes*. For though Pride be always in the general an affectation of ſome tranſcendency, yet it differs as to the particular object, according to the ſeveral eſtimates men make of excellencies. So that the *propugners* of New Opinions, though they have this *common aim*, that they ſeek their *own exaltation*, yet do not always do it in the *ſame inſtances*. For example, *ſome* have coveted the repute of *profound Inquiſitors*, and this Vanity has promoted them to dive ſo deep into the *bowels* of every the *plaineſt doctrine*, till at laſt they have twiſted and entangled them into the moſt *perplexing difficulties*. Theſe *Navigators* think they have never ſail'd ſucceſsfully, till they have found out a *Terra Incognita*, though God knows they bring nothing from thence for the benefit of the habitable world; nor make it their buſineſs to *reſolve* Doubts, but *ſtart* them. *Another ſort* of men there are of ſo faſtidious and petulant wits, that they diſdain an *opinion* of which themſelves are not the *Authors*; they love not to have their underſtandings preſcrib'd to, by the preconceptions of others, how divinely ſoever inſpir'd, and will rather have a Religion of their *own making* than of *his* whom they pretend to worſhip. And this, 'tis to be doubted, is the bottom of the great *veneration* ſome have paid to *Reaſon*, which they have ſet up in the *Throne*, not only in defiance of *blind implicit aſſent*,

but even of *divine revelation.* But in the mean time 'tis to be obſerv'd, that 'tis not reaſon *in general,* the common excellency of our nature, that is thus advanc'd, but every man's own *private* and *individual* ; which upon a juſt ſcanning will often be found the moſt diſtant thing from what it is call'd: *Paſſion* and *Fancy,* by that omnipotent advantage of being a man's own, often paſſing for *deep diſcourſe* and *ratiocination:* and what a fruitful harveſt of Tares ſuch ſeed is apt to produce, our *reaſon* would inform us if our *experience* did not. To theſe we may add *another rank* of men, who vehemently thirſting after a *name* in the world, hope to acquire that by being the *diſſeminators* of *novel doctrines* ; they think while they go on in the *beaten track,* they ſhall be obſcur'd in the *Throng*; the only way to make themſelves conſpicuous is to be ſingular: Thus fondly chuſing to be eminent, though by the infamous Characters of *Heretick* or *Schiſmatick,* and (like him that fired *Diana*'s Temple to ſecure himſelf from oblivion) build themſelves *Monuments* of the *Churches ruine* : And ſure this *Theudas* his ambition of being ſome body, has helpt to raiſe more *opinions* than he did *men.* Yet commonly it anſwers it even in that circumſtance alſo ; for when by *ſeparating themſelves* from the *unity of the Faith,* they have rendred themſelves remarkable, their next aim is to have *others joyn* to them ; and ſo they may have the honour of being *leaders,* care not though it be into the ditch. To be call'd of men *Rabbi, Rabbi,* is enchanting Muſick to any *Phariſee,* and ſerves like the Timbrels in *Tophet,* to drown the cries not of their *Children,* but *Mothers* ſcorching in the flames of their contention. Indeed ſo impetuous and uncontroulable is this kind of *vanity,* that like a mighty torrent, it bears down all before it, overwhelms not only the oppoſite *virtues,* but even all *vices* that are not of its own confederacy. Men can in this caſe lay ſevere reſtraints upon their moſt *intimate ſenſualities,* when they ſuſpect them *treacherous* to this grand Deſign. The *Wolf* ſhall be muzled and made to behave himſelf with the meekneſs beſeeming the *Sheeps* cloathing. The *Swine* ſhall be waſht, and by an unnatural violence with-held from the *mire* : All their rapacious and beſtial *appetites* controul'd and made tame, that they worry not their *reputation.* And all this for a little naked *popularity,* for whoſe dear purchace, very many have thought fit to diveſt themſelves, both of lawful and unlawful *enjoyments* ; and have thought the tumultuous *applauſe* of a few factious ſpirits worth all that *ſelf-denial.* But all Pride is not ſo perfectly *Chamælion* as to ſubſiſt upon this *mere Air,* there is another kind of it that propoſes to it ſelf ſomething beyond this: Such is the affectation of rule and dominion, which though in reſpect of any real good to the ruler, is as very a *Chimæra* as the former ; yet commonly they that are under ſuch a *Juriſdiction,* find to their coſt 'tis more than *Imaginative.* And God knows this *aſpiring humour* has been no leſs fatally active in *Eccleſiaſtick* than in *Civil* affairs ; nor has the Church ever been in more danger of *Anarchy* than by *thoſe* who moſt impatiently coveted a ſhare in its Government ; for where this ſpirit of Ambition is the Impellent, it does like the *Demoniack* in the Goſpel, burſt aſunder all *fetters* and *chains,* violates the unity both of doctrine and diſcipline, nor is any attempt too bold for men thus animated: They who long to be in authority think the *door* opens not quick enough for their entry, and impatient of ſo tedious an expectation, chuſe rather to make breaches in the *walls* (nay ſometimes to undermine the *foundation*) than to want an *acceſs* to their Deſires. Neither is there any thing ſo ſacred, which upon this occaſion they cannot proſtitute ; when *Diotrephes,* 3. *John* 9. ſeeks preheminence, the Dictates even of an *Apoſtle* ſhall be rejected; and even the Divinity of *Chriſt*, *God bleſſed for ever*, be trampled on, when *Arius* wants a footſtool to climb up to his affected greatneſs. In a word, if we examine the occurrences of all Ages, we ſhall find that either the Eagerneſs of *acquiring*, or the Revenge of *miſſing dignities*, have been the great *inſtigators* of Eccleſiaſtick Feuds; and ſure our *Modern* ſtories are not likely to fall ſhort of the *Ancient*, in examples of this kind. And as Pride make *ſome* thus paſſionately deſirous of rule, ſo it makes *others* as impatient of being ruled; and even thoſe who cannot hope to arrive to *give* Laws, will not endure to be *under* thoſe already eſtabliſhed. That *this* is indeed the Chriſtian *liberty* for which many in our days have ſo unchriſtianly contended, is too apparent, the *fundamental quarrel* has been againſt *ſubjection*: Yet to countenance and abett that, whole armies of frivolous cavils have been rais'd, and the *Church* attacqued in every its remoteſt concern; and though there be nothing farther from that unity of mind, to which the ſimile was firſt affixt, yet in a perverſe ſence it imitates the *Ointment* of *Aaron* in *deſcending from the head to the skirts of the clothing*: Not only the *ſupreme* and *more eminent parts*, but the moſt *ſlight extrinſick* and *inferiour relatives* to Religion being aſperſt and depraved; and the moſt *innocent* Circumſtances of Civil or Natural actions made *criminal*, when applied to Divine things. A ſtrange *infective power*, which theſe men have conveyed into God's ſervice, that it muſt thus pollute every thing that approaches it. That the *place* where his Honour dwells, muſt become a *Peſt-houſe*, and diffuſe *contagion* to all in it: (I wiſh by the way their *Sacrilege* had not been too valiant in deſpiſing the Danger of thoſe *infected utenſils*, which may perhaps ſadly verifie the reproach, and prove *treacherons prizes*.) And when mens *zeal* operates thus unkindly, when the pretence of *internal ſanctity* devours all *outward decency*, and *God* is to be honoured and exalted by thoſe ways, whereby men would think themſelves affronted, and vilified; we have too great reaſon to think ſuch a zeal as little according to *godlineſs* as *knowledge*, and that it is not ſo much the *tenderneſs* of their Conſciences, no nor generally the *weakneſs* of their Brains, but the *Iron ſinew* in their Necks, which makes them at once ſo ſcrupulons, and ſo clamorous; for though the *former* might be ſuppoſ'd owing to Error, the *latter* can ſurely proceed from nothing but Pride. Several other inſtances might be given to ſhew how that pernicious temper has contributed to the riſe and firſt being of our diviſions; and having thus given them birth, it does not like the *Oſtrich* abandon its brood, but has as great an influence in the *cheriſhing* and *maintaining*, as it had in *creating* them. Of this there need no other proof than the mere *nature* of Pride, which as it averts nothing more than *ſelf-condemnation*; ſo upon pain of that appearance, 'tis irreverſibly engag'd in the purſuit of its firſt undertakings, any *deſiſting* being interpretatively a *confeſſion* either of an Error or a Defeat, both which are inſupportable to an aſſuming temper: So that beſides the *original incentives* forementioned, it has this of *diſdain* ſuperadded to actuate its motions. And accordingly we find they are at this rebound the more violent, not only the *ſucceſs*, but the *credit* of the firſt enterprize depending upon a vigorous proſecution: So that *Catiline's* Maxim of *Villiany* ſeems to have been adopted into ſome mens *divinity*, and they think paſt Crimes are only to be ſecur'd by more and greater. Nor is it only *hope* to atchieve their *deſign*, or hide their *ſhame* which thus animates them, *deſpair* will do it to a yet higher degree. Our concupiſcible and Iraſcible appetites dwell not ſo remote, but they are ready reſerves to one another, and what was *deſire* in the purſuit, becomes *anger* and *revenge* in the diſappointment; and ſure we need not be told the wild effects of thoſe paſſions. How many men have in a *furious deſpair* over-acted even their own *projects*, and have made it a malicious conſolation in their ruine, to get it attended with that of the publick? As *Herod*, who to ſecure a *lamentation* at his death, commanded a *Maſſacre* ſhould accompany it, or (to give a more Eccleſiaſtical inſtance) like *Aerius*, who ſought the aboliſhing of that order in the Church, whereof himſelf could not partake. I wiſh no man's *Conſcience* in our days were qualified to ſuggeſt a freſher example. But whilſt 'tis ſo many ways the *intereſt* of Pride to abett our *contentions*, we cannot think it ſo ſluggiſh or uninduſtrious an *agent*, as not to find out *expedients* for its purpoſe. I ſhall not attempt to give a particular of its *inſtruments*; when I have ſaid that *Schiſm* is one of them, I need not add more, ſince that alone ſerves both to *complete* and *perpetuate* the Miſchief of all our ſpeculative diſſentions. How cloſe a Band of concord the *communicating in holy duties* is, we may learn by *Jeroboam*, who ſeems ſo well to have underſtood its unitive efficacy, that he durſt not truſt the newly divided *Tribes* in a joint reſort to the Temple; and therefore leſt the *rupture* he had made in the State ſhould cloſe again, he thinks it neceſſary to make *another* in the Church, and ſecure his defection from his *Prince*, by that from his *God*. But we need not borrow a *teſtimony* from that his impious *Policy*, we have a more *Authentick atteſtation* from the holy *Pſalmiſt*, who when he would deſcribe the *greateſt entireneſs*, Exemplifies it by the *walking to the houſe of God as friends*, *Pſal.* 55. 14. And the *Apoſtle* goes yet higher, and from our common *participation* of the Euchariſt, infers not only our *union*, but our *incorporation*. *We being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that on bread*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 17. And then ſure we may on the contrary conclude, that our *ſeparation* muſt have the quite diſtant effects; alienate our *affections*, and by that means ſtill more eſtrange our *Judgments*. For beſides that 'tis natural to men to think they can never run far enough from that they begin to loath, they are in their own defence to amplifie the *differences*, that they may acquit themſelves from the *ſcandal* of a cauſleſs ſeparation; and this God knows is the uſual Method among us, when we have broken *communion*, our only ſtudy is not how to *repair* but *juſtifie* it. The Adverſaries *Tenets* are rigorouſly ſcanned, new *Charges* exhibited, and the *Schiſm* defended upon thoſe later diſcoveries, which were no motives to the taking it. And then ſure no man can doubt but this is a *proper way*, both to *multiply and Enternize diſputes*; and 'tis abundantly manifeſt, that vanity and elation of mind is the cauſe that Men thus prefer a *miſtaken reputation*, before their own *innocence*, or the Churches *peace*: Indeed if we throughly conſider it, we ſhall find *Pride* is one of the fatalleſt inſtruments of Exciſion, the two-*edg'd ſword* by which adverſe parties do mutually cut themſelves from one another. The very *elements* and *conſtitutive parts* of a Schiſmatick, being the *Eſteem of himſelf*, and the *Contempt of others*. *I am not as this Publican*, was, we know, the voice of the proud *Phariſee*, whoſe very name ſignifies *ſeparation*, and our modern *Separatiſts* do but Echo the ſame note, when they pronounce all thoſe *Heretical* or *Carnal* from whom they have withdrawn. Or perhaps they derive from a yet more ancient precedent, thoſe of whom the Prophet *Eſay* ſpeaks, *Eſay* 65. 5. which ſay, *Stand by thy ſelf, come not near me, for I am holier than thou*; an Inſolent kind of language, which the *Cathari* in the *primitive times* did not more exactly tranſcribe, than many *Sects* of differing denominations have done in *ours*. But 'tis to be remembred, that while the *Phariſee* lookt ſo faſtidiouſly on the poor

Publican, he renounc'd communion in prayers much more acceptable than his own; and thoſe *refined Zelots*, who fear'd *contagion* from the approach of their more innocent Brethren, could boldly venture on the *pollutions* of the moſt deteſtable Idolatries: And God knows the note has too ready an application in both inſtances. In the mean time 'tis a ſad contemplation that ſo much of that *zeal* which makes ſuch a gliſtering in the world ſhall, when brought to the Touch, be found *adulterate*; that the tranſcendent *purity* men boaſt of ſhould prove but a more ſublimated *wickedneſs*, and their *pretence* to ſpiritualty be verified only in *ſpiritual pride*. Alas, is not the whole *circuit* of Secular things wide enough to contain this *ſwelling humour*? Are there not *Pomps* and *Vanities* of the world enough to entertain this one *Luſt*, but muſt this *Moabite* be brought into the *Sanctuary*? Can we not be *elevated* enough unleſs we *trample upon* all that is holy, and make *Religion* Factor for our *Ambition*? We find ſome very confidently point out *Antichriſt* upon the ſtrength of this one predicted circumſtance, that he was to *ſit in the Temple of God*. But what need we travel beyond the *Alps* to find out that, which *every where* preſents it ſelf? Our Pride does too unhappily anſwer the deſcription; and though there is no inſtance wherein it can ceaſe to be *Antichriſtian*, yet ſure it is more eminently ſo, when it thus uſurps *God's ſeat*, and rules in ſacred things. Would God the *pains* and *animoſity* which has been ſpent in diſcovering and reviling *other* Antichriſts, had been diverted to the pulling down of *this*, the labour would have been more effectual even to the immediate end of the Deſigners; for were this Pride *eradicated*, the Foundation of all Spiritual uſurpations were *undermin'd*. But alas, thoſe who exclaim the moſt loudly againſt all *foreign Tyranny* on their Conſciences, do obſequiouſly bow to this *inteſtine Uſurper*, make an entire dedition of themſelves, and ſubmit to the ſevereſt and ignobleſt *vaſſalage*. They have inveſted it with ſo abſolute and ſoveraign a Power, that (as *Samuel* warns the *Iſraelites* of their King, 1 *Sam.* 8.) they are not to call any thing their own, when it is uſeful to its ſervice: All their powers, all their intereſts are devoted to it, and that not only to adorn its *pomp*, but to fight its *battels*. Men quarrel and contend till not only *themſelves*, but even *Chriſtianity* it ſelf expire in the conteſt. But if it be indeed certain that every *War* is ſo far unjuſtifiable, as are the *cauſes* of it, 'twill ſurely be a competent prejudice againſt our contentions, that our Pride is ſo much concern'd in them, which is ſo unchriſtian a *motive*, as all the *holy water* wherewith men have ſprinkled it, can never baptize into a *cleanneſs*; all the *borrowed dreſſes* of Zeal and Sanctity, however they may *diſguiſe*, can never *legitimate* it. Thoſe arts of concealment may indeed add a *new guilt*, that of *Hypocriſie*, but can never expiate, no nor extenuate the *old*: And how *Saint-like a form* ſoever our *Vain-glory* puts on, it does but the more own its derivation from *him*, who can *transform himſelf into an Angel of light*, whoſe aſpirings have firſt ſubverted *himſelf*, and now go on to propagate both his Crime and Ruine to *us*; nor has he ever manag'd that *deſign* with more Art or Succeſs, than by thus making our Pride a *partition-wall* to divide us from *one another*, and conſequently from *God* too; who being, as our Church ſtiles him, the *author of Peace* and *lover of Concord*, can never joyn himſelf with the *diſturbers of both*, but muſt neceſſarily be diſobliged by our Diſſentions and Schiſms.

CHAP. XIV.

A Survey of the Cauſes; Secondly, Curioſity.

Another cauſe of our Diſſentions is unwarrantable Curioſity.

1. IF now we proceed farther in our enquiry we ſhall find, that another grand *incendiary* of our Diſputes is *Curioſity*: A vice which though in ſome reſpects it may be reckoned a *ſpecies* of the *former*, that of Pride, yet in others it admits a *diſtinct conſideration*. This is that baneful *weed* which the Devil made a ſhift to ſteal even into *Paradiſe*, and which has ever ſince affected the *richeſt ſoils*, the moſt pregnant and polite Wits; nor did it only eject *man* from thence, but it has improved the *original curſe*, and multiplied thoſe *Briars* and *Thorns* among which he was caſt, yea tranſplanted them from the *Earth*, where they could only raze the skin, into the *Brain*, where they pierce and torture the intellectual and immortal Part of Man. Nay, farther, even that *ſweat of his brows*, which was to extripate them from the *ground*, ſerves but to water and cheriſh them in his mind; his very *induſtry* being in this caſe the extremeſt *ill husbandry*, and the more *pains* he takes, the farther he removes himſelf from all *real advantages* of his toil.

Curioſity about ſome things is both ſinful and dangerous;

2. There are ſome parts of *Knowledge* which God has thought fit to ſeclude from us, to fence them not only as he did the interdicted *Tree*, by Precept and Commination, but with Difficulties and Impoſſibilities; made it not only our *ſin* and danger, but our *Folly* and madneſs to attempt them. Of this kind are the Myſterious parts of our *Religion*, which he ſhews us as it were a-far off to exerciſe our *faith* and *reverence*, but ſtoops them not to our *ſenſe* and *diſquiſition*. Theſe he has placed like the *Sun*, where they may influence, not annoy; warm, not ſcorch us. And would we ſtill permit them to remain at that ſafe and wholſome *diſtance*, we ſhould find none but *benign effects*; but ſo importunate are the inſtigations of Curioſity, that no *bounds* will keep us from the *Mount*: We will needs break through into the *thick darkneſs*, how dreadful ſoever the *thunders* and *lightnings* are in the way. Like bold *Phaetons* we deſpiſe all *benefits* wherewith the Father of light and us can court us, unleſs we may guide his *Chariot*; and we moralize the *Fable* as well in the tragicalneſs of the *event*, as the inſolence of the *undertaking*; this unhappy Curioſity having not only ruin'd many of the *inquiſitors*, but ſet the whole *world* alſo in a *conflagration*. Nor is this temerity more *fatal* in its Succeſs, than *impious* in its Foundation: For beſides that it is a direct *invaſion* of God's peculiar, and *violation* of his Command, it does evidently imply a *diſtruſt*, either of his Wiſdom or his Goodneſs; ſuppoſes him either ſo *ignorant* of the ſtrength of thoſe faculties himſelf has made, that he has aſſigned them unproportionable objects, and ſo they muſt have new work cut out for them by our ſelves; or elſe preſumes his *Eye evil* towards his own Creatures; that as the *Devil* once ſuggeſted to our *firſt Parents*, he fears the rivalry of poor mortals, and by an envious detention of ſome parts of felicity, like one that had been Bountiful only upon *ſurprize* and *incogitancy*, illiberally retracts and contradicts his *original deſign* of making Man completely happy. Nay, indeed this repreſents him unkind, not only to *us his created Images*, but even to that Eternal and expreſs image of his Perſon, *the Son of his boſom*, who may well be thought to have been, as deſpiſed in *his Eyes*, as he was once in *ours*, *Eſay* 53. 3. if he have ſo cheaply expos'd him for their ſakes, to whom he denies any of thoſe *intellectual advantages*, which difference *them* from *Beaſts*. Thus wickedly curious are we, that rather

than converſe with *vulgar ordinary things* , we create *prodigies*, put *new forms* upon him that is *unchangeable*, rob *divinity* of its moſt inſeparable *attribute*, and not only *diſobey* God, but reproach him. And then 'tis no wonder if that which affords ſo little *glory* to God, hath no more *good will* for Men, and that which thus wars with *Heaven*, leave little peace on *Earth*. Indeed if we will be building our *Babels*, and thus aſſault *Omnipotence*, 'tis but juſt we ſhould have our *language confounded*, and that that *knowledge* for which we boldly attempt to rifle God's Cabinet, ſhould like the *Coal* from the Altar, ſerve only to embroil and conſume the *ſacrilegious invaders*. Yet beſides what is owing to divine vengeance in the caſe, the thing has in it ſelf a proper, natural efficiency towards it; for when ſo many men are engag'd in a *blind ſearch*, 'tis not imaginable they ſhould all *ſtumble* upon the ſame Notions, and ſuppoſing them to fall upon *variety*, 'tis impoſſible but men's fond overweening of their own conceits and petulant diſdains of others, will improve that *variety* into Oppoſition and that *oppoſition* into ſet and Solemn Feuds. And God knows the Church is too effectually acquainted with this *fatal gradation*, and can experimentally atteſt the *unhappy propriety* of this ſort of Curioſity towards the engendring of *diſcord* and *confuſion*.

In other things 'tis vain, uſeleſs and unprofitable.

3. But beſides this *higher* rank of things which God hath ſet ſo much *above* us, there are others of an *inferior* ſort, as much *below* us, which are concealed from us, not for their *ſublimity*, but their *uſeleſneſs*; for as God on the one hand remembers that we are but *fleſh*, unable to bear the nearer approaches of *divinity*, and ſo talks with us as once with *Moſes* through a cloud: So on the other he forgets not that *he breathed into us the breath of life*, a vital active ſpirit, whoſe motions he expects ſhould own the dignity of its *original*, and as it was it ſelf an *emanation* of the Eſſential Goodneſs, ſhould aim at only *real* and *ſolid good*, and not evaporate and exhauſt its powers in *mean* and *impertinent purſuits*. And upon this ſcore alſo, he has found it neceſſary to hide many things from us, not that they would *dazle*, but *miſemploy* our Eye; not *ſwallow* up our Underſtanding, but *divert* our Attention, from what is more important: Of this ſort are thoſe many thin *aerial ſpeculations*, the certain knowledge whereof would bring us no real advantage, make us at all the wiſer to Salvation; yet ſuch a value does our *inquiſitive Nature* ſet upon every thing for its being *hid*, that as if our Life were bound up with theſe Secrets, and all our Felicity dwelt in the Shade of theſe receſſes, we purſue this ſearch with indefatigable *induſtry*, ranſack all corners with as great *diligence* as the *Woman* for her loſt piece of Silver, *Luke* 15. 8. And as if this were indeed the *treaſure* hid in the field, ſell *all* that we have, lay out our whole *ſelves* upon the *purchace*. Indeed he that ſhall conſider what ſolemn Diſquiſitions there are upon the ſlighteſt, and inconſiderableſt Subjects, with what Advertence and concern Queſtions of this kind are bandied in the world, muſt wonder how men can at once be ſo *ſerious* and ſo *trifling*; or that thoſe who can ſay *ſo much* ſhould not once ask themſelves to what purpoſe they ſay *any thing*. Yet what multitudes of men are there engag'd in ſuch caſes as this? When alas, the Quarry is not worth half the toil, could it be gotten: But what *Solomon* ſays of the *ſluggard*, *Prov.* 12. 27. that *he roaſteth not that which he took in hunting*, is true of the contrary temper, theſe *over-buſie ſpirits* whoſe labour is there only reward, they hunt a *ſhadow*, and chaſe the *wind*; and when they ſtrain to their utmoſt ſpeed, there is ſtill the wonted Diſtance between *them* and their *aims*; all their eager purſuits bring them no acquiſt; but after they have traverſt ſo much *ground*, traced all the *mazes*

that learned Curioſity could contrive to perplex men, and ſtudied to the wearineſs of the *fleſh*, if not to the quenching of the *Spirit* too, they are ſtill in the ſame *ignorance* from whence they ſet out, and 'twere well if they were alſo in the ſame *doubtfulneſs*: But the unhappineſs of it is, they acquire a *confidence* without any *true ground* of it; and get ſuch a Knowledge as may *puff up*, but not *edifie*. This was eminently exemplified in the *Gnoſticks* of old, whoſe vain *Chimæra's*, and *fooliſh queſtions*, as the *Apoſtle* calls them, *Tit.* 3. 9. paſt with them for ſuch a *ſuperlative wiſdom*, as gave them Inſolence to diſcriminate themſelves from others by that ſwelling *Title*, and monopolize the reputation of *Science*, which yet if we will believe the great Doctor of the *Gentiles*, and he too brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, the greateſt *Rabbi* of the *Jews*, was *Science* falſly ſo called. And God knows, they want not ſucceſſors in this as well as in other particulars; men are ſo poſſeſt with their own *Fancies*, that they take them for *Oracles*, and think they ſee viſions, and are arrived to ſome Extraordinary *revelations* of Truth, when indeed they do but dream *dreams*, and amuſe themſelves with the Fantaſtick *Idea's* of a buſie imagination. Yet would they only pleaſe themſelves in the deluſion, the Phrenſie were more innocent; but like the prouder ſort of *Lunaticks*, they will needs be *Kings* and *Rulers*, impoſe their wild *conjectures* for *Laws* upon others, and denounce *War* againſt all that receive them not. And this is that which makes the great combuſtion, and confuſion among us; for while one man opines one way, another another, and each will obtrude his *opinion* on every body elſe; 'tis impoſſible but the *conteſts* ſhould be ſharp and endleſs; for each man labours under a double Impatience, the *one* of having his own notions rejected, the other of having the quite contrary impos'd on him; and though 'tis true the *reciprocalneſs* of the Injury ought to allay the *diſpleaſure* at it, yet men ſo much more conſider what they *ſuffer* than what they *do*, that every one cries out aloud of that hard meaſure, which himſelf offers without regret. And between *winds* ſo contrary and ſo fierce, 'tis no wonder if *ſtorms* ariſe; and in ſuch *Tempeſts* has Religion ſo long been toſſed, that it now needs the interpoſition of a divine *Miraculous power*, to keep it from ſinking; for alas, theſe *skirmiſhes* expire not with the firſt Propugners of the Opinions; they perhaps began as *ſingle Duellers*, but then they ſoon get their troops about them, have their *partiſans* and *abettors*, who not only enhance, but entail the feud to poſterity. And indeed this propagation of Strife, both in theſe *trifling* and the former more *profound* ſpeculations, is the moſt fatal circumſtance of the whole Caſe: Were it not for this, though we might have *many Errors*, we could have *no Sects*. And if the Church might be ſometimes wounded with the *darts* of ſingle Adverſaries, yet ſhe could not be ſurrounded and beſieg'd with *combinations* and *confederacies*. Some ſtragling Souldiers might prove *renegadoes*, but they would not revolt in *troops* and *legions*. We ſhould not have ſuch numerous Parties, who with the greateſt violation of Chriſtian unity, denominate themſelves, not from the *grand author and finiſher of our Faith*; but from the *firſt broacher of their Idoliz'd opinions*. In the mean time, 'tis a ſad contemplation, that a little *vain curioſity* ſhould weigh ſo much or the Churches *peace* ſo little with us: That we ſhould ſacrifice the one, to the *ſatisfaction*, ſhall I ſay, or rather to the *whetting* and *inflaming* of the other. But 'tis a yet ſadder, that this ſhould chiefly be done by thoſe whoſe *learning* enables, and whoſe *profeſſion* ſhould devote to the moſt noble and moſt profitable Studies; nay, have the higheſt obligations to correct thoſe *exorbitancies* in others, which

which with ſuch *art* and *labour* they propagate and teach. How wounding a ſpectacle is it to ſee our greateſt *Heroes* like *Hercules* at the *Diſtaffe*, thus degenerouſly employed, and to find thoſe who were by Chriſt deſign'd for *fiſhers* of *Men*, thus entertain themſelves like *Children*, with *picking up Shells* and *Pebbles* on the ſhore; and which is yet more unmanly, *wrangling* about them too? Indeed at this rate, 'tis no wonder if they make the *diſciples* complaint, *We have travelled all night and have taken nothing*. This ſure is ſo little the way to win Souls, that he whoſe buſineſs it is to deſtroy them, can very contentedly refer them to this method; can gladly leave us all our nice and ſubtle *diſquiſitions*, upon the very ſame ſcore that one of the *Gothick* Commanders adviſed the ſparing of the *Italian Schools* and *Libraries*; Let us, ſays he, leave them their Books, that whilſt they amuſe themſelves with ſuch *follies*, we may ſubdue them at our *pleaſure*. It is the ſaying of the Wiſe man, *There is a wiſdom that multiplieth bitterneſs*; and ſure if there be a wiſdom acquired by theſe curious Enquiries, 'tis of this ſort, like the Knowledge of Good and Evil attained by our firſt Parents, which taught them to know the good only by its *loſs*, and the evil by its *ſmart*. Indeed our too high, and tranſcending *ſpeculations* on the one hand, and our too trivial and unprofitable on the other; are like the *torrid* and *frigid* Zones, the one conſumes us with its *heat*, the other chills and benumbs us with its *cold*; that turns us to *Cinders*, this to *Ice*. Theſe little trifling Notions being too ſlight an exerciſe to keep *heat* in our Chriſtianity, which not only expreſſes, but maintains its *life* by ſtrong and vigorous Motions. And therefore between theſe *two intemperate*, God has provided us an *habitable Clime*, I mean that middle rank of divine truths which tend to practice. Here he would have us dwell and converſe, fix our thoughts and ſtudies: Nor need we fear that they are too dry a ſubject for our contemplation. We ſee as deep Speculators, as any now aſſume to be, found it far otherwiſe. *David* could entertain himſelf with the *Meditations of God's Law* (not his hidden Decrees or counſels) *all the day*, *Pſal.* 119. 97. Nay, it ſeems, the Matter was ſo *copious* and *redundant*, that it could not be confin'd within that *narrow boundary* of Time, but invaded the *night* alſo; forced him to defaulk from his *reſt*, to beſtow on his *meditations*, *I have thought of thy Name, O Lord, in the night ſeaſon, and have kept they Law*, Verſe 55. Neither is it a vain expence of Time, which it thus tempts to, but gives the happieſt improvement; lands at that harbour to which all rational ſtudies tend, gives underſtanding, Verſe 130. *makes wiſe the ſimple*, *Pſal.* 19. 7. and this alſo in an eminent degree, ſuch as ſet him above his teachers, and his Elders alſo. *Thou through thy commandments haſt made me wiſer than mine Enemies. I have more underſtanding than my teachers, for thy teſtimonies are my ſtudy. I am wiſer than the aged, becauſe I keep thy commandments*, *Pſal.* 119. 98, 99, 100. Theſe are high and liberal Elogies of this divine ſtudy, and if any ſhall ſeek to divert an unwelcome inference, by ſaying that *David* ſpoke them only in pious raptures, that they were the tranſport of his *zeal*, rather than the eſtimate of his *judgment*; we muſt reſolve the objector far removed from ſuch religious *exceſſes*, and under the contrary *defect*; yet the *cauſe* will ſo well bear an *appeal*, that he may be truſted to conſult farther; let him adviſe with *Solomon*, whoſe large deſires and poſſeſſions too of wiſdom, muſt ſuppoſe him no ſtranger to its nature, and he will tell him the very ſame, and that not in his *devouter ecſtaſies*, but in his moſt *compos'd ſedate temper*, when he ſolemnly ſeats himſelf in his School, reads *Ethicks* to his diſciples, and profeſſes his deſign of giving *ſubtilty* to the ſimple, and to the young man *knowledge* and *diſcretion*, *Prov.* 1. 4. For if his whole book of *Proverbs* be ſcanned, the ſumm of it will be found to be nothing elſe but an *exhortation* to the ſtudy of this practick Wiſdom. Nay when his own *underſtanding* was improv'd and advanc'd by *experience* alſo, when he had not only *begg'd* but *bought* wiſdom, after he had given his Curioſity its full unbounded Range, compaſſed the whole Univerſe, and examin'd not only in *contemplation*, but by ſenſitive *experiment*, whatever therein could pretend to be that good for the ſons of Men, *Eccl.* 2. 3. we find after all this buſie inqueſt, he gives up his *verdict* in this form, *Eccl.* 12. 13. Let us hear the end of the whole matter, *Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole Duty of Man:* And now methinks ſo ſolemn a deciſion of the wiſeſt of Men, and he too inſpir'd by the Omniſcient God, may be thought of weight enough to acquieſce in. Yet ſince there are ſome who love not to weigh in the balance of the Sanctuary, and that had rather receive Reſponſes from *Delphos* than from between the *Cherubims:* Let ſuch at leaſt hear even the Heathen Oracle atteſting *Socrates* to be the wiſeſt man, becauſe he directed his ſtudies to the *moral part* of Learning, which he did to ſuch a degree, as to diſparage all thoſe more *Aery ſpeculations*, which bettered not men's Manners, but were only λόγων ψόφος, *noiſe and clattering of Words.* And *Pythagoras* his School defines Philoſophy, ζωῆς ἀνθρωπίνης κάθαρσιν καὶ τελειότητα *the cleanſing and perfecting of humane life*, which too things are ſaid to be done, firſt by *Vertue*, whoſe buſineſs it is to remove τὴν ἀμετρίαν τῶν παθῶν *the inordination of our Paſſions*: Secondly, by *Truth*, which reſtores θεῖον εἶδος *the Image and pourtraicture of God.* And ſince this is the joynt ſuffrage both of Religion and Reaſon, why ſhould thoſe that pretend to either, defie both, and vainly conſume themſelves in unprofitable ſearches? Why ſhould men wander to ſeek *beggary* and emptineſs, who may with far leſs labour be *rich* at home? Alas, 'tis not *bare knowledge*, how great or univerſal ſoever, that can poſſeſs us of *felicity*. Were it poſſible for us to have a window into *Heaven*, to ſee all the Divine ſecrets, yet that might be but like the Rich man's proſpect into *Abraham*'s boſom, while himſelf was in the *bottomleſs pit*. They are not only the *groſs* and *illiterate Souls* that muſt feed thoſe *flames*, the moſt *Aerial* and *Sublimated* are rather the more proper fuel for an *immaterial Fire*; and the knowledge we carry thither, renders us the fitter company for him, who knew every thing but how to keep himſelf happy. It was once the obſervation and Wonder of *Plutarch*, that whereas God has ſeveral *incommunicable properties*, as Power and Immortality, *&c.* theſe all men aſpir'd to, in the mean time neglected that of *Goodneſs*, wherein he was willing all men ſhould ſhare. And ſure there is now cauſe of the ſame complaint, we would have Omniſcience and all parts of Divinity beſides the Holineſs, yet alas, thoſe without theſe would prove but fatal acquiſts, and that approach towards being *Gods*, would only make us the more *Devils*. The only advantageous as well as poſſible *way* of Aſſimilation with God is by *purity*, and the *means* of that an Attentive conſideration of thoſe *Divine revelations*, which are to regulate our practice; theſe at once diſpenſe *light* and *warmth*, direct and revive the Soul: And if men would not exhale *vapours* to cloud and darken them, Eclipſe the cleareſt Truths by *difficulties* of their own creating, no man could miſs his way to Heaven for want of light, and yet ſo vain are they as to think they oblige the world by involving it in darkneſs, as if their *Miſts* ſhould, like that *which watered the new-form'd Earth*, *Gen.* 2. 9. ſupply the place of the *dew* of Heaven. But certainly to all ſuch in their profuſeſt liberalities, we need make no other Requeſt than *Diogenes* did to *Alexander*, deſire them only that they will not ſtand between *us* and the *Sun*, intercept its rays, and rob us of that which is infinitely better than any thing they can give us. Were this but obtain'd, we ſhould ſoon diſcern the inconſiderableneſs of thoſe things whoſe effects have been ſo ſadly conſiderable to Chriſtendom; thoſe many *Chimæras* which we wrangle and fight about, would in this Sun-ſhine appear but *Motes* that dance in the Air, (though God knows as we manage them, they are the moſt luxurious Rebels to the Prince that Rules there.) Were but S. *Paul's* doctrine throughly imbib'd, our Curious Arts, περίεργα γράμματα, *ſuperfluous unconcerned ſtudies*, would as it happened, *Acts* 19. be ſupplanted; and our *devotion*, if ſufficiently accended, would, as theirs, *burn up* innumerable *books* of this ſort. And ſure as this would be the *greateſt*, ſo it would be the moſt *triumphant Bonfire* Chriſtendom ever ſaw, as being not only an *indication*, but a *means* of the *mighty growth*, and prevailing of the Word of God, which our vain *Curioſities* ſerve only to impede and obſtruct, while they do as mightily advance *diſſentions* and *animoſities* amongſt men.

CHAP. XV.

A Survey of the Cauſes of Diſputes; Thirdly, Intereſt.

Self-Intereſt is a third cauſe of our Diviſions.

1. BUT beſides theſe *two*, there is a *third* Fomenter of diviſions, which either for its activity or ſucceſs muſt not ſubſcribe to either of them, and that is *Intereſt*. This is the great *Idol* to which the world bows: To this we pay our devouteſt homage, give it not only our *knees*, but our *hearts*; and as if the making us rich were a *ſecond* Creation, that could cancel all the obligations of the *firſt*, we ſacrilegiouſly entitle our profit to all the Prerogatives of a Creator, give it an abſolute unlimited dominion over us, allow it to preſcribe us all our meaſures of good and evil; to rule not only our *Reaſon* but our *Paſſions* too, (a Soveraignty, alas, we would never yield to our God) and as if the *giving* us *laws* were not Empire enough, we permit it to impoſe *Religious* alſo; for ſure they that obſerve how great an influence it has in *Church-affairs* will conclude it governs more than the *ſecular* part of the world. And indeed if we look back, we ſhall find 'tis no *novel uſurpation*, but though void of other Title, has the Preſcription of *many Ages*. Divinity has long ſince been made the handmaid of policy, and Religions modelled by conveniences of State. The golden *Calves* became venerable *deities*, when they were found apt to ſecure *Jeroboam's* Jealouſies: And *Machiavel's* policy, that *States ſhould ſerve themſelves of Religion*, was a common practice long before 'twas his Rule. And this Example of Communities has been tranſcrib'd by ſingle Perſons. In the Old Teſtament we find frequent mention of thoſe *mercenary* Prophets, that turn'd the *office* into a *trade*, divin'd for *money*, nay, ſometimes for more contemptible hire, *handfuls of Barley* and *pieces of Bread*: And in the new we ſee the ſame motive of Secular advantage had force enough to turn an *Eccleſiaſtick* into a *Laick*, make *Demas* degrade himſelf, and deſert his Miniſtry, and as it thus ſtopt his mouth from preaching the *Truth*, ſo it open'd thoſe of Others to divulge *Errors*: Such were thoſe deceivers of whom S. *Paul* ſpeaks, *Tit.* 1. 11. *Who ſpake things they ought not for filthy lucres ſake.* So when the ſame Apoſtle declaims the moſt earneſtly againſt the *love of money as the root of all evil*, we find he fetches his proof of that

Charge from its having *made men erre from the faith*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. And 'tis S. *Peter*'s prediction, that the moſt damnable Hereſies, even the *denying of the Lord that bought them*, ſhould be introduced by *thoſe* who through Covetouſneſs ſhould make *merchandize* of their *Proſelytes*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 4. and ſure the *event* atteſts the *preſage* to have concern'd more than the Age immediately ſucceeding, there being none of the ſubſequent which hath not in ſome degree aſſiſted its completion; nor have we cauſe to wonder *hereat*, ſince 'tis obvious to diſcern the conjunction and dependence between Covetouſneſs and Hereſie. For the *Itching ears*, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, being an *Epidemick diſeaſe*, give fair opportunity to every *Mountebanck* to try his *Experiment*. When men nauſeate *Old* truths, becauſe they are acquainted with them, and embrace doctrines for the very ſame reaſon, they ſhould reject them, even becauſe they are *New*: When they love no Teachers, but ſuch as thus entertain them, and are bountiful to none but ſuch as they love; there is little doubt, but there will be *Mints* enough ſet on work, when the *Coiners* can thus at once *ſtamp new opinions* for their Diſciples, and *Money* for themſelves: And God knows they are not a *few* of our Diviſions, that have thence taken *birth*. It will be needleſs to ravel far into the Records of Elder times, every man's memory will be able to ſuggeſt to him too many, and too pertinent inſtances. Upon which reflection 'twill be too viſible, that much of ſome men's late pretence to *Godlineſs* was but a real purſuit of *Gain*; and the *new light* ſerv'd to guide them to their *neighbour's Coffers*: And probably many of our Diſputes had been ſuperſeded, had not the Authors foreſeen, that though they loſt the Queſtion, they ſhould gain what they more ſought. A few eſſays had diſcover'd how much the *Populacy* were pleas'd with *Novelties*, eſpecially ſuch as at once gratified their *Levity* and their Pride, by caſting ill reflections on the Things or Perſons to whom they owned a reverence; and the *liberal contributions* ſuch Teachers met with, ſerv'd ſtill to invite more *labourers* into that *work*, where without the uneaſineſs of a long Expectation, their very *ſeed-time* was their *Harveſt*; and by ſowing *Tares*, they immediately reaped *Gold*; And 'tis no wonder if ſuch *quick returns* made them *diligent* at the trade, induſtrious to provide thoſe wares they ſaw they could put off ſo well. And would to God we were ſecure, that *this way* of Traffick were yet at an end, for ſo long as theſe *ſpiritual Merchants* can thus impoſe on their *credulous Chapmen*, make them buy one miſchief with another, and exhauſt their *Eſtates* to endanger their *Souls*, we muſt not hope our *diſſentions* will ever ceaſe, our *flames* ever be extinct, that have ſo much *matter* to feed them, and ſuch *importunate blaſts* to blow them up.

The contentions about Religion are in a great meaſure kept up and promoted through Covetouſneſs;

2. But *covetouſneſs* is of too unſatiable a nature to be contented with one way of ſupply, 'tis like the *Sea* that receives the Tribute of *all Rivers* (though far unlike it in lending any back again) and therefore thoſe who have reſolv'd upon the *thriving ſort* of Piety, have ſeldom embarkt all their *hopes* in one *bottom*, nor ſo depended on the *bounty* of their Proſelytes, as to neglect other *ways of preying* for themſelves. They wanted not providence to foreſee, how uncertain a revenue popular benevolence is: That the ſame giddy and violent *humour*, which had opened their hands *ſo wide*, might by working another way cloſe them *as faſt*; or if their *inclinations* continued, their *abilities* might fail; (a thing very poſſible to thoſe, who have ſuch ſuckers) or if both theſe remain'd, yet that they were unlikely to grow in proportion to their own appetites, and therefore found it neceſſary to have ſome other reſerve; and beſides, this way of *flattering* their willing *benefactors* out of part, contriv'd another of *forcing* their unwilling

Neighbours out of all their *poſſeſſions*: So making the ſpoils of ſome mens *honeſty* a richer booty than that of others *folly*. Hence *Shiboleths* ſound out of Covenants and Engagements, to give opportunity of deſtroying a diſſenting brother; by this Art a *fat Benefice* became *crime* and *witneſs* too againſt its Incumbent, and he was ſure to be *unorthodox*, that was worth the *plundering*. Thus alas, has the *Altar* of God been attended, or rather invaded by thoſe whoſe very *approach* was a *guilt*, that qualified them rather to lay hold on its *horns*, than pretend to its *ſervice*; for ſure that God, who has declar'd he hates *robbery* for *burnt-offering*, cannot much affect *Robbers* for *Prieſts*. But this is a Theme ſo unpleaſant, I delight not to enlarge on it, and rather wiſh that the memory of it were ſo extinct, that it might remain no where but in the penitential Litanies of the Offenders; my deſign in the preſent reflection is only to make it an evidence how much *covetouſneſs* promotes our *contentions*, which ſure is not more viſible any where than in this inſtance: For where there is any deſign of ſupplanting that neceſſarily requires another of accuſing; (even *Jezebel* her ſelf projects not to ſeize on *Naboth*'s Vineyard without a precedent *Charge*) to comply with which neceſſity, not only the *lives* and *converſations*, but the *doctrines* and *opinions* of our moſt eminent Divines have been ſtrangely miſrepreſented, and when that proved not *fence* enough to the *reputation* of their Oppreſſors, they have thought fit to change the *Scene*, and to combate thoſe *opinions* in their *true ſhape*, upon which they could not ſo well faſten their *diſguiſe*. I ſhall not here need to ſay with how much, or how little pretext of reaſon they managed thoſe Diſputes: 'Tis enough to my purpoſe that ſuch Diſputes there were, and thoſe founded in the deſire of acquiring ſecular advantages, which ſufficiently atteſts *Intereſt* to be a potent *Abettor* of our quarrels.

which appears in the diſturbances given the Church *(by Anabaptiſts) abroad:*

3. But God knows that is a truth of which the *world* affords ſo many proofs, that we need not confine our ſelves to this little *Angle* of it, or owe our *convictions* only to our *domeſtick tranſactions*; if we look abroad we ſhall find it too often exemplified. The memorable *diſturbance* given to the Church, as well as State of *Germany* by the *Anabaptiſts*, is a pregnant inſtance; whoſe *new opinion* was but an expedient of inveſting themſelves in *new poſſeſſions*, and their *ſecond Baptiſm* but the ſolemnity of eſpouſing, not only the *fleſh*, but the *world* alſo, which they had renounced in the *firſt*.

The opinions of many of our Sects are wholly ſubſervient to their worldly intereſt.

4. And would God they had been the only Sect of Men, whoſe *doctrines* were ſubſervient to their *intereſts*; for ſuch tumultuous and *Plebeian projects*, though like a *land-floud* they make great ſpoil at the preſent, yet ſoon ſink again. Such avowed and *exceſſive greedineſs* devours it ſelf, and the *inſtruments* by which it wrought: So that the *defeat* of the ſecular Deſign is commonly the *rooting* thoſe Opinions, which were formed for the promoting it. But when the ſame deſire has the advantage of a ſober guidance; when *Avarice* puts on the *Canonical habit*, and twiſts it ſelf not only with the *practice* of Men, but the *doctrines* of the Church; when *Articles* of Religion ſhall be eſtimated by their *profitableneſs*, and Eccleſiaſticks *diſpute*, as Lay-men *fight for Money*: Then alas the *miſchief* ſeems fatal, the *diſeaſe* ſo fixt and radicated, as at once diſcourages, and mocks the attempts of *cure*.

The Religion of the Romiſh *Church is chiefly calculated for the ends of Covetouſneſs and Ambition.*

5. That this is the caſe not only in a *particular* and *private* Church, but that which aſſumes to be the *Univerſal* and *Catholick*, is too apparent. The one Poſition of the Pope's right to diſpoſe of Kingdoms, out-ſtrips all other principles of rapine: This is to drive a *whole-ſale* trade, when all other petty Merchants deal but for *parcels*: Which as it is a much *bolder*,

ſo is it a more *prejudicial* attempt than the invading of private poſſeſſions, and theſe *Duo Gladii*, the double armature of S. *Peter*, a more deſtructive Engine, than the tumultuary weapon ſnatcht up by a *Fanatick*: but ſure S. *Peter's ſword*, though once raſhly managed by himſelf, was never deſign'd to arm his *ſucceſſors* to invade Kingdoms: This *property* of it ſeems rather to have been deriv'd from the *Prætorian Souldiers*, who inſolently aſſumed the diſpoſing of the Empire, wherein they at the laſt arrived to that *impudence*, that after the Death of *Pertinax*, they made *open portſale* of it, αἰσχρῶς καὶ ἀτίμως, ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν ἰδιωτικῶν κειμηλίων, *in a baſe and ſordid manner, as if it had been of common marketable wares*: I cannot ſay the Court of *Rome* tranſcribes that indecent owning of the traffick; but it has in other inſtances ſo well atteſted its good managery, that 'tis not very credible, that Crowns and Scepters are conferred *gratis*. And to *this* ſo advantageous a Doctrine *others* bear a proportion: Thoſe of *Purgatory*, *Indulgences*, and *Supererogation*, are ready inſtances, wherein the *Aſſertors* themſelves ſeem to be unanimous in nothing but in a joynt reference to profit; for when they come to minute definitions, they vary and diſagree; ſatisfie one another, as little as their common *Antagoniſts*: And therefore in the Council of *Trent* they prudently choſe in their Decrees to propoſe the bare *Articles* backt by the Authority of the Church, and *Anathema's* of the Council, as having by precedent *diſcuſſions* of the points in their congregations diſcern'd the ſmall *accord* that was among themſelves, when they deſcended to *particulars*. And indeed the *Opinions* were ſo various as to the grounds of the Doctrines, that one would wonder how from ſo differing *premiſes*, they ſhould all infer the ſame *concluſion*; were it not that the *conſpiration* of Intereſt was too potent for the *diverſity* of Judgment. And ſure 'twas a ſtrange deference was given to it, when in the matter of *Indulgences*, there was (by the Teſtimony of their own Writers) four *different* Opinions, and yet all *Catholick*: Which moderation towards *Speculative* Diſſenters, compar'd with the great ſeverity againſt thoſe that oppoſed its *Practice*, ſpeaks loud enough that the *Orthodoxy* of the point lay wholly in the *Profitableneſs*; and that *Luther* himſelf had been no *Heretick*, had he buſied himſelf only in ſuch diſquiſitions, as impeded not the *gain* of that Doctrine. Nor is this merely ſurmiſe and conjecture, for if we conſult the *memorials* of thoſe tranſactions, we ſhall find *this* was the thing that moſt alarm'd *Rome*, put that Court in almoſt as great a *commotion*, as the *birth* of Chriſt did *Herod's*: And accordingly in their private conſults, the cloſer *cabals* of the College, the *ſecuring* this part of their invaded treaſure was the grand *deliberation*; upon which account it was, that when *Adrian* ſhewed ſome Inclination to the reforming abuſes both in this and other inſtances, one of his *Cardinals* who better knew the intrigues of affairs, admoniſht him againſt that unskilful piece of *Ingenuity*, not only from the example of his *Predeceſſors*, who were reſolute never to confeſs Faults by *mending* them, but by *repreſenting* to him, "That no *reformation* could be made, which would not notably "diminiſh the *rents* of the Church, which having four foundations, the one "*Temporal*, the other three *Spiritual*, Indulgences, Diſpenſations, and Col-"lations of *Benefices*: no one of them could be ſtopped, but that one quar-"ter of the revenues would be cut off. What a reſemblance this advice carries to the Oration of *Demetrius* to his fellow crafts men, *Acts* 19. 25. I need not ſtand to demonſtrate; but while ſuch conſiderations as this bear ſway in Church-matters, where *Profit* ſhall be the *Touch ſtone* both for Faith and Manners, we are not to wonder if no *gainful Tenet* be depoſited; or *Peace* bought with that which in moſt mens eſteem is of far more value.

6. And

which renders the differences between her and us Irreconcilable.

6. And this is it which ominates ſadly as to our diviſions with the *Romaniſts*; were our *differences* merely the product of Heat and Paſſion, they would like the *ſmaller clefts* in the ground, want nothing but a *cooler ſeaſon* to cement and cloſe them: But when they are thus form'd into an *intereſt*, become the Deſign not of *ſingle perſons* or *ages*, but of *corporations* and *ſucceſſions*; the Breach ſeems like the *ſciſſures* and *ruptures* of an Earthquake, and threatens to ſwallow all that attempt to cloſe it, and reſerves its cure only for omnipotence. Indeed till *ſpiritual* and *ſecular* Concerns be reduced into their proper ranks, which are now mixt and confounded, the better to diſguiſe the prepoſterous ſubordination of the nobler to the inferiour; till we have forgotten the unhappy *Chymiſtry* of turning *all*, even *Religion* it ſelf *into Gold*, we muſt never hope to get out of the *Furnace*; our *flames* will ſtill grow fiercer, and with this unnatural *effect* to conſume not the *Droſs*, but the purer *Metal*. In a word, till men can ſever themſelves from their *Avarice* and mean purſuits of gain, they will never ceaſe to ſeparate from their *brethren*. For as the moſt *ſoveraign Balſams* cannot cure a hurt while the *Arrow* remains in the fleſh: So neither can the moſt *pacifick Remedies* at all avail, ſo long as the ſame *worldly Aims*, which made the wound, ſtill ſtick in it.

The ſacrilegious ſpoils of our Church is owing to the covetouſneſs of our late Reformers.

7. But in the mean time 'tis a *Melancholick* conſideration that Chriſtianity ſhould be by its Profeſſors thus unworthily proſtituted; that the many various and oppoſite Religions, for which we ſeverally pretend ſo much zeal, ſhould be but divers ways to the ſame irreligious End; wherein our *Elders* ſeem to reſemble thoſe in the Story of *Suſanna*, who when they meant to *part* with each other, yet did unawares meet by the impulſe of the ſame Luſt. We find, it moved the *patience* even of the *Lamb of God*, to ſee his Father's *houſe* made a houſe of *merchandize*, though the Traffick was for the furniſhing of Sacrifices: With what abhorrence muſt we think does he now behold thoſe, who drive ſo much a worſe trade in it: Who ſell not *accommodations* for worſhip, but the *worſhip* it ſelf to accommodate their *intereſts*, and do not only make Gain *in* the Temple, but *of* it? A thing the ſacrilegious Rapine of our days has made literally true, where beſides the *revenues*, the very *fabrick* and *materials* of Churches, have been *marketable ware*; *Judas*'s good husbandry has been taken up, and *ad quid Perditio hæc?* put as the *common Motto* upon every thing that could be ſold for *more*, nay ſometimes for *leſs* than *Three hundred pence*. And as *Dionyſius* took away the golden beard from *Æſculapius*, to rectifie the indecency of the Son's having a beard when the Father had none: And *Julian* robb'd the Chriſtian Altars with this *impious Sarcaſm*, ἐν ποίοις σκεύεσιν ὑπηρετεῖται ὁ Μαρίας υἱός; that '*twas unfit the Son of Mary ſhould be ſerv'd in Plate*. So do men now a-days make themſelves *regulators* of holy things, correct the *indecorums* of the Sanctuary, that they may rifle its *treaſures*. Thus do we ſee the Apoſtle's affirmation ſadly verified, that *thoſe who will be rich fall into Temptation, and a ſnare*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. Such is the greedineſs of a *covetous appetite*, that it ſwallows indiſcriminately whatever looks like *prize*, and rather than want its prey, God *Himſelf* ſhall be *robb'd*. Nay, 'twere to be wiſht in this inſtance, that that were all; but alas, he is *mockt* too, uſed not only *unjuſtly*, but *contumeliouſly*; we thus make him a property to our ſordid deſigns, and when he has profeſt that he will not be ſerv'd together with *Mammon*, we attempt that which is yet far more blaſphemous, and make him pay ſervice to him with whom he diſdains to ſhare it when paid by others.

Religion is too commonly made uſe of to ſerve a baſe luſt and vile end;

8. Neither is Covetouſneſs the only *Vice* that ſerves its intereſt upon Religion: But as 'tis made a *factor* for that, ſo it is a *cloak* and *diſguiſe* for many other. Of this the Catalogues of primitive *Hereticks* give ſufficient witneſs; divers whereof as the *Nicolaitans*, *Cerinthians*, *Carpocratians*, and *Gnoſticks* ſeem to have conſtituted diſtinct Sects in *Chriſtianity*, only that they might introduce the moſt beſtial parts of *Heatheniſm*, and pretend an aſſociation in *Religion*, when indeed it was in *luſt*. How far ſome of our modern Sects reſemble them in this particular, I will not undertake to pronounce: Though there want not thoſe who make *ſevere*, and not *improbable* Conjectures concerning it. But whether that be the main deſign or no; 'tis certain both that wickedneſs, and many other find great ſhelter among them. He that brings *reſolution* to uphold a Faction ſhall not miſs of *Entertainment*, how many or how great vices ſoever he brings with it; and *he* that is of a *godly party*, ſhall in ſpight of the loudeſt Guilts be a *godly man*. So *meritorious* a thing is it in ſome mens account to be *factious*, that *it covers the multitude of ſins*: Hence it is that *Criminals* ſo frequently fly to new Churches for *Sanctuary*: And 'twill ſtill be the concern of ſuch to have ſo creditable a *Refuge*; and therefore we are not to wonder if *this* Intereſt combine with the *former* in promoting our Diſſentions.

9. But alas, as it advances *thoſe*, ſo does it our *guilt* too, that have more than one vile end to which we accommodate our Piety: And ſtill implies the greater *affront* to our God, by how many the more and baſer *intereſts* we ſhroud under his Patronage. Alas, is it not enough, as *Job* ſpeaks, *to hide our iniquities in our own boſoms*, but muſt we wrap them in the *Veil* of the *Sanctuary*? We read that *Goats* once lent a *covering* for the Tabernacle; but here by an impious Inverſion, the *Tabernacle* muſt lend a *covering* to the Goats: The moſt *beſtial appetites* be both concealed and preſerved under the *Shadow* of Religion. *Plutarch* tells us, that when *Marcellus* would have conſecrated a *Temple* joyntly to Honour and Virtue, the *Prieſt* reſiſted it, ſaying, *two Gods dwelt not in one Church*: And if their *vain deities* exacted ſuch a ſolemnity of Reſpect, and would not be Inmates to *one another*, can we think the *true God* will be content to be made ſo to all our *vileſt luſts*? This is ſure the higheſt Contumely to the divine Majeſty; and never could the *abomination of deſolation* more properly be ſaid to ſtand in the *holy place* than in *this ſenſe*; For as the *natures* of theſe Guilts are fitly expreſt by *abomination*, ſo is the *effect* of them by *deſolation*; they having brought the moſt *fatal miſchiefs* on the Church.

the guilt whereof ought ſeriouſly to be weighed and ponder'd by us all.

10. And now would God all that are concern'd in this guilt, would ſoberly ponder the weight of it. There are *two things* of which God has expreſt himſelf peculiarly Tender, his *honour* and his *Church*; this is the invading him in both; the expoſing the *one* to Reproach and Contempt, and the *other* to Ruine and Deſtruction; and doubtleſs were there nothing of the *former*, this *latter* alone muſt be ſadly accounted for. It remains yet a Character of infamy upon *Achan*, that he troubled *Iſrael* to enrich himſelf: And on *Balaam*, that *he not only loved the wages of iniquity*, but *enſnared the people in uncleanneſs*: And ſure the ſame with many aggravations belong to thoſe, who by the like unworthy practice, have not only rendred the Church a prey to *Foreigners*, but made it ſo to *it ſelf*; engag'd one part of it againſt another, till the whole is ſo waſted, that our *Religion* ſeems now nearer extinction, than our *quarrels* about it.

CHAP. XVI.

A Survey of the Cauſes of Diſputes; Fourthly, Paſſion.

Paſſion a fourth cauſe of our Diviſions.

1. A FOURTH grand contributer to our diſſentions is *Paſſion*, which being by God and nature placed in a ſubſerviency to reaſon, when it quits its *proper ſtation* and aſſumes *Empire*, it muſt needs diſorder and ſubvert not only the State of the *Mind*, but of *every thing* upon which it has an Influence. I ſhall not here attempt any *Philoſophical* diſcourſe either of their *nature* or *number*; all that concerns the preſent enquiry falls under one of theſe two, our *love*, or our *hate*; and is either Kindneſs and Prepoſſeſſion, or Spight and Prejudice: For the *firſt* of theſe 'tis a thing which *common experience* atteſts to be a moſt forcible corrupter of the underſtanding, which being by native right deſign'd a *Judge*, is by this interrupted in its *office*, not permitted to make thoſe impartial Enquiries, on which a right *ſentence* ſhould be founded: But (as it fares ſometimes with *Magiſtrates* in Popular inſurrections) forced to give countenance to its own *violation*, to own not its proper native dictates, but ſuch as are preſented to it, by the prejudicate Fancy. And as it thus lays reſtraint upon the *ſuperiour* part of the Mind, keeps the underſtanding in fetters, ſo (to complete the inverſion) it takes off all ties from the *inferiour*: Gives not only *licence*, but *incitation* to the other Paſſions to take their freeſt range, to act with the utmoſt impetuoſity. And ſure there can nothing more be required, to render it a moſt apt *inſtrument* of Tumult and Confuſion. For when every *opinion* that is taken up, ſhall inſtead of *reaſon* and *argument*, arm it ſelf with *heat* and *violence*, there can be no end of contending. And the truth of this is, God knows, too ſadly diſcernible in our *Church-controverſies*, which derive a great deal of their *warmth* and *bitterneſs* from this Fountain.

Prepoſſeſſion and Kindneſs to men's perſons and doctrines hath given countenance to many ancient Errors.

2. Of this prepoſſeſſion there are two Sorts, the one relating to *Doctrine*, the other to *Perſons*; by the firſt I mean not a ſober conſtancy to thoſe principles which being firſt imbibed by *education*, are afterwards retain'd upon *Judgment*, but an eager *tenacity* of Opinions, not ſo much upon *Truth* or *Evidence*, as upon a confus'd irrational *kindneſs*; a *Platonick love* of ſome Doctrines merely for themſelves, and then making them the *ſtandards*, by which all others are to be meaſured: And this kind of Prepoſſeſſion is no Stranger in the world, there being multitudes of men, who aſſert opinions with all imaginable vehemence, who can give no better ground of it, but becauſe they like them: And as the wiſer ſort *chuſe* a Tenet, becauſe 'tis *right*, ſo theſe conclude 'tis *right*, becauſe they have *choſen* it. And having thus enamour'd themſelves of their *Helena*, they expect all ſhould adore, nor can he eſcape the note of Profaneneſs that refuſes. By this abſurd partiality it is, that ſome *doctrines*, which would themſelves ill abide the *Teſt*, are become the *Touch-ſtone* both of Doctrines and Men, and no Opinion or Perſon ſanctified which bears not this impreſs. I need not ſtand to give inſtances, either of the *Doctrines* or the unhappy *influence* this eſpouſing of them has had on our diſſentions; but indeed this kind of *Prepoſſeſſion* is oftentimes the *conſequent* of another; and this great *veneration* of ſome Opinions is founded in the *reverence* of their Authors. Men take up a confidence of the *learning* or *ſanctity* of a Perſon, and then all his *notions* are received implicitly, ſtrictly embraced, but not ſo much as ſlightly examined, & this *admiration* of men's perſons, has in all ages been of

huge *miſchief* to the Church, has nurſt up *private* Fancies into ſolemn *publick* Errors, and given an unhappy perpetuity to many *Heterodox opinions*, which would elſe have expired with their *firſt propugners*. This ſeems to have been foreſeen by S. *Paul*, when he ſo earneſtly exhorts the *Corinthians* againſt the aſcribing their *Faith* to their ſeveral reſpective *Teachers*: But ſure I am, 'twas ſadly experimented by the *ſucceeding Chriſtians*, who owed many of their *diviſions* to it. A pregnant inſtance hereof was the *Millennium*, which in ſpight of its improbability prevail'd *long*, and almoſt *univerſally* againſt the *Truth* upon the ſtrength of *Authority*. *Papias* a holy man and Scholar of S. *John*, having deliver'd it, the *eſteem* of his Perſon canoniz'd his *miſtake*, and men choſe rather to admit a *doctrine*, whoſe unagreeableneſs to the Goſpel-Oeconomy rendred it ſuſpicious, than think an *Apoſtolick man* could ſeduce them. And the force of this is yet more conſiderable, when 'tis remembred that it found *proſelytes*, not only among the *Vulgar*, who are commonly flexible to any new Impreſſion, but among thoſe of a *higher rank*, men that were *lights* in their generation: *Juſtin Martyr* and *Irenæus* having own'd the *Opinion*, and intimated it to have been received by many others no leſs *Orthodox*; and if ſuch a ſeduction could prevail ſo early in thoſe purer times, before mens intereſts or ſpleen were adopted into their Religion, and begot voluntary errors, if I ſay the *mere reputation* of a Teacher was then ſingly ſo operative; we cannot wonder at its efficacy in conjunction with thoſe *auxiliaries*, which worſer times have brought in. What concurrence of thoſe there was in the ſeveral *Hereſies*, which after infeſted the *Church*, I ſhall not now examine, but 'tis viſible that many of them grew conſiderable, chiefly from the *fame* of their Authors; thus *Tatianus* upon the credit of being *Juſtin Martyr*'s diſciple, had an advantage to diſſeminate his errors, and not only his, but thoſe of *Origen*, *Apollinaris* and *Novatus*, gain'd abetters from the *reputed Orthodoxy* of the Perſons that propos'd them, who having aſſerted the Faith in *ſome* points, were qualified the more proſperouſly to oppoſe it in *others*.

Many blindly give up their Faith and Conſcience to the conduct of their admir'd Teachers.

3. Nor has it been only the miſhap of elder times to have felt the miſchiefs of ſuch prepoſſeſſion; the *diſeaſe* has ſtill advanced, and every day improved in worſe *effects*, by how much men have more degenerated from *primitive integrity*; ſo that the *eaſie Proſelyte* is now in danger, not only from the *blindneſs*, but the *treachery* of his guide, and is often lead out of the *common road*, as theives draw paſſengers into *by-ways* for the better opportunity of robbing them: But 'tis not my preſent buſineſs to ſend *Hue and cry* after them, to examine what the intentions of thoſe *leaders* are, who miſguide their tractable admiring *followers*: 'Tis enough for my purpoſe to obſerve, that thoſe who ſo deliver up themſelves in a blind aſſent to the dictates of any man, are in his power to be abuſed by him if he pleaſes: I ſhall leave it to others, to eſtimate the *probability* that they ſhall not be actually ſo: But certainly this may be ſaid, that theſe *later* Ages have beyond all the *former* given Opportunities of ſeducing to any that will uſe them. The one eſtabliſht Doctrine of *infallibility* among the *Romaniſts* is eminent for its propriety that way, while under pretence of *ſubmiſſion* to ſomething they call *Infallible*, 'tis evident that the *faith* of the ignorant Vulgar reſolves it ſelf into that which they acknowledge moſt *fallible*; the Doctrine of their immediate Teachers. But indeed take it at the beſt, ſuch a *perſwaſion* is not only an *error* in it ſelf, and an apt *foundation* for innumerable others, but it neceſſarily renders them incorrigible; the leaſt retractation of a *miſtake* being ſo inconſiſtent with the claim of *infallibility*, that while they retain the *one*, they muſt never attempt the *other*, nor can they ceaſe to

Erre, till they confeſs it poſſible they may do ſo. How much more than poſſible that has been, the many Innovations of that Church ſufficiently witneſs; and conſequently the danger of preſuming upon the unerrableneſs of a guide. But would all that *upbraid* it there, were themſelves *ſecure* from it, and that many did not in their practice tranſcribe that *decried doctrine*, and that too with the improvement of worſe *circumſtances*. I muſt call them *worſe*, by how much the *probabilities* of Erring are *greater* under the extemporary conduct of a *private perſon*, than the fixt rules of a *community*, and by how much again the voluntary enſlaving my ſelf is more excuſeleſs, than that which the principles of my Profeſſion, and conſequently a ſeeming obligation of Conſcience expoſes me to. And as to the matter of Fact, I think 'tis evident enough that the *admiration* of mens Perſons is a *ſpreading diſeaſe* that has over-run Chriſtendom; and though a great part of it inveigh againſt *implicit faith*, yet if it be throughly ſcanned, 'twill appear 'tis rather the *object* than the *act* we differ about. He that vehemently oppoſes that homage to the *Conclave*, will yet tamely pay it to a *Claſſis:* And he that refuſes it there, yields it to the Votes of a *Congregational Church*; or if he hold out againſt that too, yet chuſes to himſelf ſome *private Teacher* on which to caſt it: Like *Micah, Judg.* 16. *Makes him a Teraphim and a Prieſt too, for his private uſe*; and then confidently conſults his *Oracle*, and has nothing to do but believe its *reſponſes*. Nay, that which makes the matter yet more ſadly ridiculous, is that the very Oppoſition to *one* Uſurpation makes them deliver themſelves up to *another*. How many, when they have heard a *Preacher* rail fiercely at the *Pope*, have preſently made him *theirs*, and ſuppoſing that Zeal an *indication of a ſafe guide*, have given him as *abſolute a rule* of their Conſciences, as that he exclaim'd againſt (perhaps Envied) elſewhere? And the like inſtances might be given among our other diſſenting parties. And this has taught ſome Seducers a lucky artifice, made them obſerve to what opinions their Proſelytes had the greateſt averſion, and by complying with their *anger* ſo ſteal away their *love*, that they might after lead them to what they *pleas'd*, yea, perhaps to that which they ſo much deteſted: For there want not examples of ſome, who have by back ways been brought to thoſe Opinions, which at firſt they moſt defied. What have been the *attempts* or *ſucceſs* of the Emiſſaries of *Rome* this way, I ſhall not pronounce, though ſome (not improbably) ſpeak them *great*.

and chuſe to denominate themſelves from the name of a particular Sect, as if they were aſhamed of that of Chriſtian.

4. From this blind and paſſionate *eſteem* of ſeveral Teachers have flowed many *pernicious conſequents*, particularly thoſe diſtinct Appellations, which form *differences* into *Sects*, many of which expreſly own *this original*, by bearing the names of their *firſt Authors*. I might here put them in mind, that they are *illegitimate perſons*, whom our Law directs to write with an *alias*, and ask them, *Whether the Church from their ſuperinduced name, has not cauſe ſo to repute them.* But I am ſure I may with the utmoſt ſeriouſneſs ſay, that this *practice* is to the great *violation* of Chriſtian unity, and *reproach* of Chriſtian Profeſſion, which ſeems to be abandon'd and diſown'd by us, who inſtead of denominating our ſelves from the *Author and finiſher of our Faith*, find out *new Patrons*, as if we were aſham'd of our *firſt Relation*. Alas, how is the title of *Chriſtian*, which was ſo *glorious* to the *Primitive owners*, that they gladly bought the occaſion of boaſting it with Torments and Death, become ſo *deſpicable to us*, that every the obſcureſt name is courted to ſupplant it! Have any of our *Idolized readers* bought their intereſt in us ſo dear as *Chriſt* has done, why then are we rather ambitious to be accounted their *dependants* than *his*? 'Tis the *Apoſtle*'s own argument,

1 Cor. 1. 13. when he refutes their factious entituling themſelves to *Paul* and *Appollo*, &c. by aſking them if *Paul* were crucified for them: And indeed he there ſays ſo much upon this point, that I need only refer the Reader thither to learn, either the *unreaſonableneſs* of this Schiſmatical zeal for our ſeveral Teachers, or the *inevitable contentions* and *animoſities* which ſpring from it; only let me obſerve, that every of his Arguments are more preſſing upon *us*, than on the *Corinthians*; thoſe taken from the unreaſonableneſs ſure are, by how much the *names* we ſo adore are leſs venerable than thoſe of *Paul* and *Cephas* and *Apollo*; and thoſe from the conſequences are ſo alſo. For thoſe Teachers were induſtrious to *prevent*, whereas ours commonly are no leſs buſie to *promote contentions* on their behalf, and ſo we are more aſcertain'd never to want them.

Prejudice and diſlike hath likewiſe given Birth to many Hereſies in the Church,

5. But beſide this *kinder* prepoſſeſſion towards ſome mens perſons, there is another of a different nature, a *ſiniſter* one. I mean *prejudice* and *diſguſt*; and *this* has done no leſs harm in Eccleſiaſtical affairs than the *former* Men take up *piques* and *diſpleaſures* at others, and then every *opinion* of the diſliked perſon muſt partake of his *fate*, and be engaged in the *quarrel*: Nor will thoſe that are enemies ever allow one another the honour of being in the right: Nay, ſome have been ſo perverſly *malicious*, that they have given up their *underſtandings* to their *ſpleen*, forſaken an Opinion themſelves approved, only that they might find matter of conteſt with one they maligned. A memorable inſtance of this *Socrates* gives in his *Eccl. Hiſt.* in *Theophilus*, Biſhop of *Alexandria*, who having formerly atteſted the Orthodox belief, that God was incorporeal; yet upon a ſudden indignation againſt *Dioſcorus* and his brethren, who maintained the Tenet, he embraced the contrary Hereſie of the *Anthropomorphites*, that ſo under the Colour of a difference in *faith*, he might the more advantageouſly purſue his *malice*; and the Effects of it were very Tragical, not only to *private perſons* in Tumult and Bloud-ſhed, but to the *Church* by reviving that Error, which was before near expiring, and might, as *Socrates* affirms, have lain in the duſt, had it not been thus awaken'd. And indeed in Church ſtory ſcarce any thing occurs more frequently than examples of thoſe, who upon private grudges have either begun or fomented Hereſies and Schiſms. Thus *Marcion* being denied the Communion of the *Roman* Church, having before by a *ſcandalous crime* been cut off from his own, he reveng'd himſelf by publiſhing his *deteſtable doctrine*: In like manner *Miletius* upon a diſpleaſure at *Peter* Biſhop of *Alexandria*, firſt ſeparated from the *Church*, and after took part with the *Arians*: So alſo *Lucifer* incenſed at *Euſebius* for not approving of his Electing *Paulus* to the See of *Antioch*, broke Communion, and gave both riſe and denomination to a new *Sect*. The like is ſaid of *Apollinaris*, that he was excited to the broaching his *Hereſie* by his impatience of the Excommunication inflicted on him and his Father, by *Theodotus* Biſhop of *Laodicea*; and ſeveral others might be given to the ſame purpoſe, out of the Records of thoſe firſt Ages.

and hath mightily inflam'd our preſent differences and diſſentions

6. And certainly the World ſeems not to have ſo much improved in *meekneſs* ſince, as that we ſhould think the ſame *principle* is not ſtill as *active*; and if the Task were not more envious than hard, many recent inſtances might be given to Parallel the former, eſpecially of ſuch as having juſtly ſmarted *under* the ſtroke of *Eccleſiaſtical diſcipline*, have ſought to revenge themſelves both *on it* and *the inflictors*, by Factions and Tumults; ſo making the *publick* at once cloak the infamy, and bear the charge of their *particular* rancours. But this is a Subject neither grateful nor neceſſary to be more diſtinctly ſpoken to. One may however in the general ſay,

that where theſe private Animoſities are any thing *violent*, they uſually beat down all Conſideration of *publick good*. *Hiſtorians* obſerve of *Themiſtocles*, that he always thwarted the Counſels of *Ariſtides*, not that he thought it the Intereſt of the *Commonwealth*, but *his own*, to keep down the growing reputation of his Competitor: And I fear that envious artifice has been too often tranſcrib'd, as well in *Eccleſiaſtick*, as in *Civil* Tranſactions: No *detriment* is thought ſo formidable to a malicious mind, as the *proſperity* of his Adverſary; and publick Ruptures ſhall ſtill be allowed to widen, till they ſwallow up the whole, rather than he will cloſe with his Antagoniſt. The Hiſtory of the *Scottiſh Church* gives an appoſite Example of this in a *ruling Presbyter*, who being by King *James* adviſ'd with about the re-admitting Marqueſs *Huntley*, and preſt with the preſent exigencies of Church and State, which requir'd it, gave his *final anſwer* in theſe terms: *Well, Sir, I ſee you reſolve to take* Huntley *into favour, if you do, I will oppoſe it, chuſe whether you will loſe him or me, for both you cannot have.* Some may think the greateſt propriety of this inſtance lies to ſhew the *inſolence* of that Tribe towards *Majeſty*; but however 'tis not impertinent to the matter in hand alſo; and ſhews how light the greateſt *publick concerns* are, when *malice* is the counterpoize: And indeed the *Naturaliſts* experiment, that *flame* will not mingle with *flame*, never juſtifies it ſelf better than when applied to minds thus accended, which however they may *meet* in mutual flaſhes, can never *unite* and *incorporate*: The ſadneſs of it is, that they ſhould only conſpire to *common vaſtation*, and make the Church it ſelf a *burnt-offering*.

Our Paſſions have been fatal both to our Church and Religion

7. Thus fatal have our ſeveral ſorts of prepoſſeſſions been to our Religion, for as if that were the *common Enemy*, our moſt diſtant contrary Affections, our *love* and our *hate* equally annoy it; thoſe brutiſh parts of us our *Paſſions*, which like the *beaſts* under the Law, were never to be brought into the *Temple*, but for *ſacrifice*, are *now* found there upon a far differing account, not to be *ſlain*, but *ador'd*; like the *Egyptian Iſis* and *Oſyris*, enſhrin'd to receive our *Devotions*; for that the Zeal we pretend elſewhere is really paid to them, is, alas, too manifeſt.

CHAP. XVII.

A Survey of the Cauſes of Diſputes; Fifthly, Zeal.

Miſtaken zeal hath been another cauſe of our Breaches and Diviſions.

1. TO theſe ſeveral cauſes of our diſtractions we may add another, which though in its *original* it may ſeem more *innocent*, yet is in its *conſequents* no leſs *pernicious*, and that is a *miſtaken Zeal*; which as it is *fire* to all about it, ſo is it *wind* to it ſelf, fans and irritates its own *flames*, and by a confidence that it does *well*, gathers ſtill freſh vigour to do *more*. How great the force of ſuch an Erroneus perſwaſion is, we may collect from our Saviour's premonition to his Diſciples, when he tells them, that *thoſe who kill'd them ſhould think they did God ſervice*; and if *Murder*, and that of *Apoſtles* too, could by the *Magick* of blind Zeal be ſo transform'd, we muſt not wonder to find other *Crimes* ſo too. And what *Chriſt* thus foretold was after eminently exemplified in S. *Paul*, whom the Holy Writ repreſents under all the Phraſes that may denote a virulent *perſecutor*, as breathing out *threatnings* and *ſlaughter*, making havock of the Church, and in his own words, *Perſecuting that way unto the Death*, and being exceedingly mad againſt them; and all this he did being Zealous towards God, and out of a *perſwaſion* that he ought to do many things contrary to the name

of *Jeſus*, as we find in his *Apology* to his country-men and King *Agrippa*, *Acts* 22. 2. and 26. 9.

and lead to ſeveral extravagant pieces of ſuperſtition.

2. And of the abettors of thoſe Novel doctrines which after-times produced, we have reaſon to think many were of this Sort, eſpecially in thoſe Hereſies, which though they carried *ſecret venome* in them, had yet a *plauſible appearance* of Sanctity and Devotion; ſuch was that of the *Enchratites*, which ſeem'd to be founded in the veneration of two great Vertues, *Continence* and *Temperance*, though by extending them beyond the due limits they loſt that *Sobriety* they too ſtrictly embraced, and became *inordinate* in their Continence, and *exceſſive* in their Abſtinence: Such again were the *Euchitæ* or *Meſſalians*, who made the whole buſineſs not only of *Religion*, but even of *life*, to conſiſt *in praying*; and though by it they evacuated all other ends of both, yet having the *letter* of a Precept, and the *pretence* of Devotion on their ſide, 'twas a *proper bait* for thoſe who had *much* Zeal and *little* Knowledge. In like manner the *Novatians* Hereſie had ſo glorious an inſcription of Purity, as was very apt to attract well-meaning Souls; who ſeeing it bid ſuch expreſs *defiance to Apoſtaſie*, could not ſuſpect that it was it ſelf any *defection from the Faith*; and accordingly ſome of that Sect approved their conſtancy in times both of *Heathen* and *Arian* perſecutions. Nor muſt we be ſo uncharitable to the modern times, as not to believe many have acted upon the like Principles, and meant truth and piety, even while they actually promoted the contrary. But how ſincere ſoever the *purpoſes* of ſuch ſeduced Perſons were, yet 'tis evident the Church has ſuffered no leſs by *them*, than by the *more crafty deſigners*: Their *miſguided piety* has made as great and incurable Ruptures, as the moſt *flagitious blaſphemies* of others. And when a *rent* is once made, it matters little, whether it were done by *error* or *malice*; nay, perhaps as to the hopes of repairing, the former may be the more deſperate: For whereas *he* that knowingly *commits* an Ill, has the *Upbraidings* of his own Conſcience towards his reducing; theſe on the other ſide have its *Cheriſhings* and *Encouragements*, to confirm and animate them. And doubtleſs they are great advantages which *Satan* has in all Ages made of ſuch Perſons, whom he ſeems to have deluded in the ſame manner, that *Medea* is ſaid to have done the daughters of *Peleas*, whom ſhe perſwaded to hack their *aged Father* in pieces, in hope that by her *Magick*, he ſhould not only recover *life* but *youth*: So theſe rend and tear their *Mother* the Church, out of a hope no leſs deluſive, of reſtoring her *priſtine beauty* and *vigour*; how far the event parallels it alſo, the dying ſtate of *Chriſtianity* does too ſadly teſtifie.

Zeal in contending about the ſmaller matters in Religion, hath broken and diſturb'd the Communion of the Church.

3. Nor has it only been the Heat of *Erring perſons* that has been thus miſchievous, but ſometimes *men of right Judgments* have too much contributed to the breach of Unity, and the intemperate and imprudent *Zeal* of theſe hath ſerv'd to exaſperate the miſtaking *earneſtneſs* of the other: This happens ſometimes for want of diſtinguiſhing between the *Eſſentials* and *Circumſtantials* of Religion, and ſo looking upon a miſtake in the *latter* with the deteſtation proper only to the perverting of the *former*; by this means thoſe who have entirely embraced the ſame *faith*, have yet violated *charity* and broken *communion*: Such ſlight *minute differences* when manag'd by eager Spirits being eaſily blown up into ſolemn and *laſting contentions*; ſo that the Diſputes rais'd about ſome *pin* or *nail* of the Temple, have ſometimes ſhaken and endanger'd the *whole Fabrick*, robbed the Church of that fraternal unity which was its faſteſt cement, and ſureſt ſupport. Of this we need no more apt inſtance from Antiquity than that which has been already mentioned upon another occaſion, I mean *Victor*'s unbrother like

Heat towards the Eaſtern Churches in the *controverſie* about *Eaſter*, which had fomented that Difference into a Schiſm, which the meeker Piety of his Predeceſſors thought no ground of *unkindneſs*, much leſs of *Separation*, as *Irenæus* more at large tells him; And probably had men in all the ſucceeding Ages deliberately *pois'd* the Errors they oppos'd, and proportion'd their Diſpleaſure but to the *juſt weight* of them, many of our *diſputes* would have been ſo calm'd, that they ſhould never have become *quarrels*. But many in this particular have only us'd the *Touch ſtone*, not the *Scales*: And of Opinions that are erroneous, conſider not which are more or leſs pernicious, but with an equal violence fly at all, as if the *Stoical* opinion concerning *Sins* had prevail'd in *Errors* alſo, and that all were reſolv'd to be of the ſame ſize.

Several Errors and Hereſies have been propagated by a too hot and eager contention about them.

4. But even in thoſe of the higheſt kind it may perhaps be doubted, whether *too eager an oppoſition* have not ſometimes done *hurt*, eſpecially in thoſe Doctrines which relate to the *myſterious parts* of Religion, wherein a *novelty* is at firſt lookt upon with ſome horrour, and many are willing rather to *condemn* in groſs than nicely to *examine*: Who yet when they find this done for them by *Orthodox perſons*, they think they may with ſuch a guide venture to wade into the queſtion, where many times the *inſinuations* of Error are ſo ſubtile, that all their *Antidotes* ſecure them not from *infection*, but they are themſelves *captivated* where they expected only to *triumph*. Neither want there thoſe of the *Vulgar* that are of a more *inſolent temper*; and out of a vanity of making themſelves *Umpires* between learned men, greedily read the writings of both Parties, who yet are able to make no *ſolid judgment* of either; and when 'tis remembred how many *popular artifices* there are to byaſſe ſuch perſons, we muſt confeſs that *Truth* hath many to one *Odds* againſt her: Beſides, *publick arguing* oft ſerves not only to exaſperate the *minds*, but to whet the *Wits* of *Hereticks*, and by ſhewing them the *weak parts* of their Doctrines, prompts them to rally all their *Sophiſtry* to fortifie them, that what they want of *truth* and *reaſon*, may be ſupplied with *fallacy* and little colours; and Experience ſhews how fitly that kind of *Logick* is accommodated to the greateſt part of the World. In ſhort, it ſeems not improbable, that many Hereſies owe much of their *growth* to the improper means of *eradicating* them: And have acquir'd a *reputation* from the *ſtir* that was made about them. Thus *Socrates* tells us, that *Alexander*'s letters about the *Arian* Hereſie ſerv'd to ſcatter that peſtilent infection the more abroad, and combin'd men into parties, ſo that the whole *world* became the *Scene* of that long Tragedy, which poſſibly might have had a ſhorter and better *iſſue*, had not the notice of the Controverſie been ſo early diſperſt.

Religion not to be propagated by Arms, though the Zeal of the late times did ſo;

5. But if the Attempts of the *Pen* have often proved ſo unfit, it may be conſider'd whether thoſe of the *ſword* are not more ſo, and *fighting* be not a worſe expedient than *diſputing*: And certainly we have great reaſon to conclude in the affirmative, if we weigh either the Injuſtice, or Unreaſonableneſs of it. I know there want not thoſe who have thought the propagating Religion by Arms not only *lawful* but *meritorious*, and that in order to the *planting* it in a Nation, the *ſoil* may be mellowed with the *bloud* of the Inhabitants; nay, the *old* extirpated, and *new* Colonies planted. But we are to remember, that as God is the *univerſal Monarch* of the World, ſo We have all the relation of *fellow ſubjects* to him, and can pretend no farther juriſdiction over each other, than what he has delegated to us: And ſure 'twould be hard to produce any commiſſion from him for the invading a Nation only becauſe 'tis not of our Faith. 'Tis ſure,

thoſe to whom he firſt entruſted the promulgating of the Goſpel had far *different inſtructions*, and 'twere fit our *new Evangeliſts* ſhould ſhew their *later authority* for this ſanguinary Method; in order to which though ſome have made uſe of the *Opinion* of ſome Schoolmen, that *dominion is founded in Grace*, yet as that is but an Opinion, ſo were it admitted as the moſt certain Truth, it could never warrant any enterprize of this kind; for ſuppoſing that a people by wanting *ſpiritual* Bleſſings did loſe all their right to *temporal*, yet that Forfeiture muſt devolve only to the Supreme Lord; and when as God in another caſe asks, where is the *bill of divorce? Eſay* 50. 1. ſo we may demand of theſe zealous Invaders, where is the *bill of aſſignment*, by which that right was transferred to them? In ſhort, *peace* is the moſt valuable bleſſing of humane life, and we cannot without injuſtice deprive men of it, though we could as we pretend, give them *truth* in lieu of it; for maugre the *Proverb*, that *Exchange will ſtill be Robbery*, where the parties are compelled to make it. But alas, 'tis a vain imagination to think that Religion can be thus impos'd: Or that we can bind the *underſtandings* and *wills* of men, with the ſame fetters we do their *bodies*; 'tis true indeed the Apoſtle tells us *there is a way of bringing every thought into Captivity to the obedience of Chriſt*, but he tells us withal that the *weapons*, by which that Victory is atchiev'd, *are not Carnal*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. Indeed did Religion conſiſt only in ſome external *conformities*, external *force* might bear ſome proportion to it (which perhaps is the cauſe that the one is moſt us'd by thoſe whoſe religion is moſt eminent for the other) but 'tis ſeated in thoſe *faculties* to which *outward violence* can have no acceſs. Alas, 'tis not whole Armies can beſiege my *reaſon*, nor Cannons batter my *will*, 'tis *conviction* not *force*, that muſt induce Aſſent; and ſure the *Logick* of a conquering Sword has no great propriety that way; *Silence* indeed it may, but convince it cannot: Its efficacy rather lies on the other ſide, breeds averſion and abhorrence of that Religion, whoſe firſt addreſs is in bloud and rapine: Nor do ſuch *attempts* gain any thing to the Cauſe but the *infamy* of thoſe rigours which are us'd to promote it. And ſure ſince this piece of *Mahumetan* Zeal has been tranſplanted into *Chriſtendom*, it has been much more miſchievous than in its native ſoil. Chriſtianity having been infinitely more oppreſſed by thoſe that thus fought *for* it, than thoſe that were in Arms *againſt* it. Whether upon this ſcore the *Pope* have not done her more harm than the *Turk*, I leave to conſideration.

yet Magiſtrates may uſe the ſword to defend Religion, and puniſh the violation thereof when once legally eſtabliſht.

6. But what is here ſaid of the *military* Sword, I intend not ſhould be applied to the *Civil*; for I treat not here of thoſe legal puniſhments, which *Magiſtrates* inflict upon their diſobedient Subjects; who indeed may *juſtly*, nay indeed muſt *neceſſarily* require Conformity to *Eccleſiaſtical* Laws, as well as the *Civil*: The Eruptions in the *one* commonly overflowing the *other* alſo, and *Schiſm* uſually ending in *Rebellion*; ſo that 'tis apparently their intereſt to guard themſelves from thoſe riotous effects of pretended zeal; nor is it leſs their duty, they being as the Ancients expreſs it, *Cuſtodes utriuſque tabulæ*; in S. *Paul's* language, *the miniſters of God*, *Rom.* 13. and in *Conſtantine's* dialect, Ἐπίσκοποι πρὸς τὰ ἔξω, *Biſhops of the whole outward adminiſtration of the Church*, and, if Hereſie or Schiſm be a *ſin*, are by their places obliged to approve themſelves *avengers*; to execute wrath no leſs there, than in other circumſtances: And that they are ſins and of no ſmall bulk, none can doubt that obſerves *Hereſie* ranked, *Gal.* 5. with *Idolatry*, *Witchcraft*, *Hatred*, *Murders*, and other ſins of the fleſh; or *Schiſm* markt out by the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, as a kind of *petrefying*

crime, which induces that induration, to which the fearful expectation of wrath is conſequent; for ſo we find, *Heb.* 10. 26. that *forſaking the aſſemblies* is lookt on as previous to *Apoſtaſie* and final defection: And therefore ſure the Magiſtrate can do nothing kinder, even to the Offenders, than by taking their ſin early, prevent that fatal growth of it. But (that his juſt power thus reſcued) I may aſſume my former aſſertion, and conclude, that all other Violences are ſo far from *advancing* Chriſtianity, that they extremely *weaken* and *diſadvantage* it.

Popular-heats and tumults are but an ill way of reforming Errors.

7. But of no ſort is this more eminently true than of thoſe *popular heats*, where the People undertake to *chaſtiſe error*: For beſides that the outrages then committed are very apt to avert men even from truths which they ſee ſo barbarouſly defended, it often happens that the *multitude* take *cauſleſs alarms*, and think their Faith is invaded when it is not. A memorable inſtance of this kind *Euagrius* gives in his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, where he tells us, that the Emperor *Anaſtaſius* having added to the *Triſagium* this Clauſe, *Who was crucified for our ſalvation*, the whole City of *Conſtantinople* was in an uproar, upon an ignorant jealouſie that thoſe words had ſome Heretical meaning; in which fury they happening to light upon a poor ſilly *Monk*, they immediately kill him as the *Inventor* of that clauſe, and a *conſpirer* againſt the Trinity: So unhappily abſurd are the Tranſports of *wild zeal*, which where it rules, does beſides the *direct miſchiefs* of Tumult and Sedition create *others* at the rebound, which are more permanent, and diſcompoſe and embitter mens ſpirits, and render them ſo ambitiouſly *greedy* of *quarrels* for their Religion, that they are not only prepar'd to *receive*, but to *ſeek* Encounters: And 'tis too ſure they can never be wanting to perſons of ſuch tempers, ſince the *adverſaries* of Truth cannot have more *advantage* or Encouragement againſt it than this *unpeaceable humour* of thoſe that profeſs it.

A too eager and violent zeal is injurious to Religion, and oppoſite to the meekneſs of the Goſpel.

8. By theſe ſeveral ways has it come to paſs, that even that *zeal* which ſhould be the *life* of Chriſtianity, is become its diſeaſe; and Religion like a *Hectick body* is conſumed by its own *heats*, if at leaſt I may call thoſe its own, which derive not from its proper and native conſtitution; but are the accidents of its declining ſtate: For how confidently ſoever men pronounce of themſelves, and believe that they are then moſt *pious*, when they are moſt *eager* and *unquiet*; yet 'tis ſure this is far removed from the true *genius* and temper of *religion*, which like the *God* it worſhips, makes its approaches, not in *Winds* and *Earthquakes*, but in the *ſtill ſmall voice*, 1 *Kings* 19. 12. And when 'tis conſider'd, that the greateſt part of the Evangelical Law, is made up of *precepts* of Meekneſs, Long-ſuffering, and Condeſcenſion; we muſt conclude that *zeal* very *prepoſterous*, that pretends to obey by *violating* them; or to eſtabliſh Religion by *undermining* the moſt eſſential parts of it: And to perſons under that miſtake, we may moſt properly apply the *reproof* given by Chriſt to his Diſciples upon the ſame occaſion, *You know not what manner of Spirit you are of*.

Our fierce and unnatural heats are oft miſtaken for true Chriſtian Zeal.

1. It will therefore become men to look with *Jealouſie* on themſelves in this particular; not too confidently to *purſue* every Incitation which carries a ſhew of Piety; but ſoberly to *weigh* how it agrees with the rules and Oeconomy of that Goſpel for which it pretends ſo much concern; for though the *true Chriſtian Zeal* can never be too much cheriſhed; yet alas, 'tis not *every warmth* we feel about Religion that can own *that Title*; and ſure we do not more often, or more fatally miſtake any thing than in applying that venerable *name* to things of a far *inferior*,

nay ſometimes of a contrary nature. How often upon this Error, have men aſcrib'd that to their *piety* which they owed to their *complexions*, and thought 'twas their *religion* made them Earneſt, when 'twas merely their *conſtitution*: Nay, how often has *Satan* taken this advantage of transforming himſelf into an *Angel of light*, and inſinuating his illuſions under this diſguiſe. And truly they muſt ſtill be liable to both theſe deceits, ſo long as they place the *eſſence* of Chriſtian zeal in *heat* and *eagerneſs*. 'Tis true indeed it has its heats, but actuated in a far different way; it has flames of *Love*, not of *Anger*; to melt, not conſume our Enemies; and makes us apter to pour out our *own blood* a Sacrifice to Truth than *that of gainſayers*. In ſhort, if it be a Fire, it is that *pure Elemental* which the *Peripateticks* talk of, which is but of a moderate heat; apt to *cheriſh*, not *devour*.

We may exerciſe moderation without lukewarmneſs.

10. And would God men would ſo far believe this, as to think there may be *moderation*, without the danger of *Laodicean lukewarmneſs*, and upon that ſuppoſition ſuffer themſelves to cool into a treatable Temper, and then I ſhould humbly offer to them theſe few Conſiderations.

The fallibility of humane nature ought to be an argument to charity and moderation towards thoſe that differ from us.

11. Firſt, the great and univerſal *fallibility* of humane Nature, which renders it not only poſſible that we *may*, but certain that every one of us *ſhall* err in ſomething or other; and this ſure is very proper to perſwade lenity to thoſe whom we find actually erring. 'Tis the *Apoſtle*'s argument in the caſe of Sin, *Gal.* 6. 1. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch a one in the ſpirit of meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.* Where the common Peccability of mankind is urged to induce Commiſeration and Gentleneſs towards the Offenders; and if this be of force *in ſin*, where the concurrence of the will renders the perſon more inexcuſable, it will ſurely hold much more in *bare Error*, which being purely involuntary, (for nothing is properly Error farther than it is ſo) 'tis to be lookt on rather as the *diſeaſe* than *crime* of the Perſon: And ſince we uſe not to exclaim againſt men for being *ſick*, but compaſſionately to endeavour their *recovery*, why ſhould we here uſe ſo much a *contrary method*? 'Tis true indeed, 'Tis neceſſary ſometimes in order to the *Cure*, and ſometimes for preventing the *infection* of others, to do ſome things *uneaſie* to the Patient; and what tends regularly to either of theſe Ends, may in this caſe alſo be Charitably done, by thoſe that have Authority: But *that* differs as far from our uſual *ſeverities*, as the *lancings* of a Phyſician do from the *wounds* of an Adverſary; or *publick* Diſcipline from *private* Spleen. So that notwithſtanding this, we may reſume our *concluſion*, and infer from the *Errableneſs* of our Nature, the *reaſonableneſs of compaſſion* to the ſeduced. And as it thus prompts us to look *gently* upon others, ſo alſo to reflect *impartially* upon our ſelves; and conſider how poſſible it is, that even whilſt we condemn others, we may indeed be in the wrong, and then all the Invectives we make at their *ſuppoſed* Errors, fall back with a rebounded force upon our own *real* ones. If this poſſibility were but adverted to, it would make us leſs poſitive and Dogmatical in our opinions, and ſo conſequently take away one main ground of contention: For though we often quarrel about *matters*, which are indeed but *conjectural*, yet not till we eſteem them *otherwiſe*; and when we conſider how many men have vehemently believed *apparent falſhoods*, it may well allay our *confidences* in all thoſe caſes, where we have not ſome *firmer ground* than our *own* (or indeed any humane) *judgment* to build on it.

Prudence ſhould direct us to the fitteſt means for the reducing thoſe that be in an error.

12. As for thoſe who have the *ſureſt grounds* of Perſwaſion, and by their ſecurity of being themſelves in the Truth, have the more *reaſon* to be earneſt in propagating it to others: Let them in the ſecond place conſider

how neceſſary 'tis to chuſe *appropriate means* to that good end, without which they do but undermine *themſelves*, and defeat their own *aims*. Indeed Prudence is not only a *Moral*, but *Chriſtian* Virtue; and ſuch as is neceſſary to the conſtituting of all others: Without it Devotion degenerates into Superſtition, Liberality into Profuſeneſs, and this of Zeal becomes only a Pious kind of Frenſie. And of Perſons ſo poſſeſt God may ſay as *Achiſh* did of *David*, 1 *Sam.* 21. 15. *have I need of mad men?* No ſure, the *defence of truth* is too *noble a cauſe* to be ſo managed; its *Champions* are not like men in a fray, to make every thing a weapon that they can firſt ſnatch up, and lay on as chance or fury guides, but are deliberately to conſult the propereſt expedients, uſe not only *force* but *Stratagem* againſt the Enemy, and yet withal to take care that while they *oppoſe* one, another gain not *advantage:* For alas, 'tis indifferent to our grand *Adverſary*, by which of his temptations we fall, and if by ſubverting the *faith* of ſome, he ſhipwrack the *charity* of others, he has his *end*, and triumphs at once both over the *ſpeculative* and *practick* part of our Religion.

Blind and raſh zeal many times betrays us into great errors and miſcarriages.

13. And this may enduce a farther conſideration, and prompt us to examine what degree of guilt lies on thoſe who either out of a blind, or raſh Zeal have given him this advantage. And here though I cannot doubt, but God makes *great allowances* to the miſcarriages of *ſincere intentions*, yet perhaps we have carv'd more liberally to our ſelves than he deſigns us, and preſume our Security greater than in truth it is. For how innocent ſoever a good purpoſe may make our *Error*, yet 'tis a privilege beyond all poſſibility of grant, that our *ſins* ſhould be ſo alſo; therefore if our Miſperſwaſions beget wicked practice, we may be accountable for the *one*, though not for the *other*. We find indeed S. *Paul* alledges his *ignorance*, as the cauſe of his finding *mercy*, for his perſecuting the Church, but we are to remember what that *mercy* he there refers to is; not that of *abſolution*, but *converſion:* And had he reſiſted the *latter*, though with never ſo full a perſwaſion of his doing well in it, I much doubt whether his good meaning would have ſecur'd him the *former*; So that all the *encouragement* that Example can afford is, that God may probably do more for the reducing an *erring* than a *malicious* Perſecutor: And when 'tis conſidered that all the odds that Chriſt makes between him that does ill *knowingly* and *ignorantly*, is in the *number* of ſtripes: We muſt reſolve our *miſtakes* are no ſuch *Amulets* as totally to ſecure us. And then whether our *guilts* ſhall not ſwell in proportion to the *ills* we do, is a queſtion that ſure can never be reſolved in the negative: For if a *good intention* cannot alter the *nature* of Sin, ſure it can as little change their *degree*, or make that of two Perſons equally miſtaken, the *Murder* of the one, ſhall not be a greater Crime than an *intemperate ſpeech* of the other. And upon this meaſure the accounts of erring zeal are like to riſe very high with many; unleſs we can think Rebellion and Bloodſhed, Sacrilege and Schiſm, with all that train of zealous Enormities to be light and trivial.

Our zeal for Religion will never excuſe the evil we commit in defence thereof.

14. Nor will it at all legitimate *theſe*, or any *other* Crimes, though they ſhould happen to be committed in the *defence of Truth:* Of this S. *Peter* is a ready inſtance, who when to *guard* Him, who was Truth it ſelf, he had *violated* the Authority of the Magiſtrate in *wounding* an Officer; Chriſt reprehends his raſhneſs, and inſtead of applauding his *zeal*, upbraids his *abſurdity*, that could think his *mean aids* conſiderable to him, who could command *Legions of Angels* to his reſcue. And ſure he is not ſo much more impotent in his *glory*, than he was in his *exinanition*, as now to need our *Sins* to ſecure any of his *concerns*; and if S. *Peter* were thus check'd for

uſing that Sword which he was a little before warn'd to *buy*, it muſt ſure ſet an ill Character upon thoſe *tumultuous reformations*, which have ſo much employed the *zeal* of later Ages, to which there can never want a concurrence of ſeveral great *ſins*, the *guilt* whereof will ſcarce be wiped off, by their deſign'd *ſubſerviency* to Truth; what Degree of *extenuation* it may afford, is hard to pronounce, ſince we have no *rule* to meaſure it by. But whatſoever it is, we are to remember, that it can belong only to ſuch a Zeal as is *purely Religious*, that mixes not with our *Paſſions* or *Intereſts*; and therefore before men be too forward to *appropriate* any Indulgence of that kind, 'twill be neceſſary to *Examine*, whether no ſiniſter Adherent have vitiated that *integrity* of their purpoſe, to which alone it can (even by their own award and ſentence) appertain.

A good meaning will never juſtifie a bad action.

15. I have inſiſted the more on *this*, becauſe many are apt to aſcribe too unlimitedly to the Force of a *good meaning*, to think that is able to bear the ſtreſs of whatſoever Commiſſions they ſhall lay on it; and by thus preſuming on their *Antidote*, venture boldly on the *deadlieſt poiſons*. To ſuch the foregoing conſiderations may be uſeful; and by robbing them of that *imaginary* Security, help them to a *real* one, by making their good *purpoſes* the Director of good *actions*, not the Apology for bad. This would make Religion look conſonant to it ſelf, which now groans under the reproach of all thoſe Ills, that are acted under its Patronage; and ſure to reſcue her from ſuch a *ſcandal*, is but a very moderate piece of *compaſſion*: Yet would God ſhe might obtain it even from *thoſe* who profeſs themſelves her greateſt *Votaries*: But alas, 'tis one ſad circumſtance of her ruine, that ſhe owes it to ſuch; that thoſe Weapons which ſhould *defend* her, thus *recoil* into her Bowels, and *zeal* ſhould do her more miſchief than *profaneneſs*; for while ſhe is but ſcoffed at by *that*, ſhe is wounded by *this*: Nor are thoſe *wounds* ever like to cloſe, till our Zeal grow more *balſamick*, partake of thoſe *healing qualities* of Love and Meekneſs, the Want whereof has rendred it ſo unhappily inſtrumental to our Diſtractions.

CHAP. XVIII.

A Survey of the Cauſes of Diſputes; Sixthly, Idleneſs.

Idleneſs a Cauſe of our Diſputes.

1. BUT as *this over-active* humour has done abundant Miſchief to the Church, ſo is it obſervable, that the *direct contrary* has done as much; nay, which is yet ſtranger, the one is frequently the product of the other, and our too *buſie zeal* ſprings from our too *great Idleneſs*. How much ſoever this may ſound like *Paradox*, yet both *reaſon* and *experience* atteſt the Truth of it; for we are to conſider that God has put an *active principle* into man, which 'tis impoſſible ſo to ſuppreſs as that there ſhall be a total ceſſation from *motion*: And therefore every intermitting of ſober, regular actings, makes way for wild Extravagant ones; for as nature is ſaid ſo vehemently to abhor vacuity, that the very inanimate bodies would forſake their ſpecifick motions to prevent it: So when the *mind* is Empty, when it has no worthy and profitable *ſpeculation* to entertain it, every the moſt improper and preternatural *Object* offers is ſelf, and importunately crouds in to fill the *vacuum*. This ſeems to have been well underſtood, though ill applied by *Pharaoh*, when he thought the *Iſraelites* propoſal of Travelling into the Wilderneſs to their Devotions, was the Effect of their too great leiſure at home; and therefore encreaſes their *tasks* as the pro-

pereſt way of diverting their *deſign*: And in like manner we find thoſe that treat of *Politicks*, inſiſt upon the neceſſity of keeping the *People buſie*, in order to which it is, that they mention the uſe of *Mathematicks* and other contemplative Sciences, to entertain the *active ſpirits* of a Nation in demonſtrating of *Problems*, ſolving *Phænomena*'s, and drawing *Schemes* and *Diagrams*, who elſe would be practiſing upon the *Government*, making new *Idea*'s and Platforms for the *Common-wealth*: And doubtleſs there is parity of reaſon in the Eccleſiaſtick State, which would have been at *more peace*, had ſome men found themſelves *other diverſions*.

The Church was at greateſt peace and Union within her ſelf, when under trouble and perſecution from abroad.

2. And this is confirm'd to us by experiment and obſervation of Event; for if we look into the Primitive times, we ſhall find that when there was a neceſſity of defending the *common faith* againſt *Heatheniſm*, when Chriſtians were employed in writing *apologies* and *vindications*, there were much fewer of theſe *inteſtine debates* (as leaſt ſuch as were *Metaphyſical* and purely Notional) they had their hands full of the *foreign Enemy*, and had the leſs temptation to jangle among *themſelves*. So alſo when they were under the greateſt ſtorms of perſecution, when the Church was moſt violently aſſaulted from *without*, it had the greateſt Calm *within*. They were then inceſſantly employed, and buſied their Thoughts in preparing for the fiery trial. Thoſe cloudy days made them keep cloſe at home waiting for the Bridegroom's coming, and ſuffer'd them not to wander abroad for thoſe unprofitable Curioſities, which though like *Oil* they might nouriſh *flame*, yet would never furniſh their *Lamps*, or gain them admiſſion to the wedding; but in the intervals, and eſpecially after the total ceſſation of their calamity, when their Peace had taken them off their *Vigilance*, then while they ſlept, the Envious man had advantage to ſow his *Tares*. Reſt made them *idle*, Idleneſs made them *curious*, and Curioſity *contentious*; and thoſe who under the Tyranny of a *Nero* or *Domitian* were in perfect harmony, under the gentle pious regiment of a *Conſtantine*, grew to the greateſt diſcord; and perhaps (beſides the Divine and extraordinary ſupports the Church had in her greateſt *conflicts*) this may be one of the beſt natural *accounts*, how ſhe came to flouriſh moſt under her heavieſt *preſſures*.

Our diviſions ariſe chiefly from the neglect of moral and practical duties.

3. But our obſervation ends not here, for beſides this extraordinary importunity of thoughts, which preſecuting times occaſion'd, Chriſtianity is in its frame and conſtitution an *active State*, has its ſtanding buſineſs, and beſides all *accidental*, a Series of *determinate*, *conſtant employments*, ſufficient to entertain men's minds: From which we may infer, that when this is throughly adverted to, there will be few *chaſms* of Time to be filled with *foreign impertinences*. And this gives a clear account how our *diviſions* have come to grow upon us, namely, by the Neglect of *practick duties*, for as every Age degenerated more from *Primitive piety*, ſo they advanced farther in *nice enquiries* and *new opinions*; and as the zeal of *practice* grew cool, ſo that of *diſpute* gathered head and vigour. So that if we conſider how far our *good works* fall ſhort of the firſt Chriſtians, we need not wonder to ſee our *controverſies* ſo far exceed them; that time which was gain'd from the *one*, being employed in hammering and forging the *other*. I do not forget that I have before ranked this *diverſion* of Chriſtian Practice among the *effects* of our Contentions and foreſee it may be thought very inartificial here, to make it the *cauſe* alſo: But alas, its concern in them is ſo extravagantly great, as to have at once the relation of Child and Parent, to be both Root and Branch, Fountain and Stream, and like a *circle* unites in *it ſelf* Beginning and End: For as it firſt gave *birth* to our quarrels, ſo it finally receives *encreaſe* from them. In ſhort, our oſcitant *lazie piety* gave

vacancy for them, and they will now lend none back again for more *active duty*. And as this *neglect* of our general calling of Chriſtianity has been thus pernicious, ſo have the *ill effects* thereof been improved by the like ill attendance on our particular ones. We find S. *Paul* takes notice, that the *younger widows*, who deſerted their own *Eccleſiaſtical* Office, grew *buſie-bodies* in the Secular affairs of others; and ſure we may with truth invert the note, and obſerve that *thoſe*, who either deſert or neglect their *Secular* Callings, are the moſt perniciouſly *medling* in Eccleſiaſtick matters. Did men conſcientiouſly employ themſelves in their *honeſt occupations*, their Minds would be ſufficiently *diverted*, and it would not become the work of Artificers to make new Schemes of Doctrines or diſcipline; Divinity would not then paſs the *Yard* and *Loom*, the *Forge* and *Anvil*, nor Preaching be taken in as an eaſier ſupplementary *Trade*, by thoſe that diſliked the *pains* of their own. But all this alas, we have ſeen to the equal ſhame and detriment of Piety. *Mechanicks* of all ſorts have preſum'd to *teach* what themſelves never *learnt*; and thoſe that ſerv'd long *Apprenticeſhips* to other Crafts, have become *Divines* in a moment, and with the ſame emulous induſtry wherewith they us'd to invent new *faſhions*, have made new *Religions*. And as Idleneſs has thus made ſome *Preachers*, ſo it has made more *hearers*, thoſe who either by the *eaſineſs* of their Callings, or their ſlight managery of them, have had the moſt *vacant time*, have been the apteſt to run after *new Teachers*: Hence it is that Towns and Cities have been the great *nurſeries of Faction*, the *leiſure* of Shop-men making them more *inquiſitive* after, and *receptive* of Novelties. And were that *over grown zeal* of Sermons, which has now devour'd all other parts of Religion, among that ſort of men throughly ſcanned, we ſhould find Idleneſs goes very far in its *compoſition*; for beſides that Hearing is the moſt *lazie* of all religious Offices, as appeas by the *undiſturb'd ſleeps* men can take at Sermons; it is manifeſt this inſatiate appetite of it, is originally founded either in the not *having* buſineſs, or not *attending* to it. For ſhould I ask ſuch men, whether if neceſſity had enforc'd S. *Paul*'s rule upon them, that without their *labour* they ſhould not *eat*, they would have ſpent their whole week at *Lectures*, and truſted to be fed by the *Ear*. I believe few could pretend to have begun with ſo exorbitant a zeal, though the truth is in the iſſue it ſometimes arrives to it; and men that have *itching ears* forget the reſt of the *body*, whilſt to gratifie them, they totally neglect all care of their *Secular concerns*, and bring Themſelves and Families to want and beggary.

Tradeſmen by the eaſineſs of their Callings, or their ſlight managery of them, have been the apteſt to run after New Teachers.

4. Nor is it only this *one rank* of Perſons whom Idleneſs has betrayed to faction; *Servants* we have frequently ſeen under the ſame Seducement, while either having but *little work*, or but *little diligence* in it, they have found time to liſten after *novel doctrines*, with which being once tainted they impatiently thirſt after more, and neglecting the *duties* of their place, ſpend their *time*, which by compact is their Maſters (and can with no more juſtice be purloin'd from him than his goods) in following *factious Teachers*, who inſtruct them ſo in their Chriſtian *liberty*, that they bring them to defie all *ſubjection*: And by telling them they are to call no man Maſter upon *Earth*, that they are to own no King nor Prieſt but *Chriſt*; teach them to contemn all Authority, *Domeſtick*, *Civil*, or *Eccleſiaſtick*.

Servants have neglected their duty to their Maſters, by running after Factious Teachers.

5. If we look farther into *families*, we ſhall find alſo that many of our She zealots become ſo upon the very ſame ground, when *Women* neglect that which S. *Paul* aſſigns them as their proper Buſineſs, *the guiding of the houſe*, their Zeal is at once the *product* and *excuſe* of their Idleneſs; and in ſpight of the *ill Character* the Wiſe man has ſet on her, *whoſe feet abide not*

Women for this cauſe have neglected their Family and Houſhold-affairs.

in her houſe, *Prov.* 7. 1.. it becomes the *mark* of a Saint, when a Lecture or Conventicle is taken in the way: And though theſe feminine Irregularities may ſeem to be of no great concern to the publick, yet experience convinces the contrary; it having been the *unhappy priviledge* of that Sex (as ancient as their Mother *Eve*) to be able to do great and important *miſchiefs*; and doubtleſs many *men* may give the ſame account of their Schiſm and Sedition, that *Adam* did of his firſt ſin, *The Woman that thou gaveſt me*, &c. This has always been well underſtood by *Seducers*, who have found it the moſt compendious way to their deſigns, *to lead captive ſilly women*, and make them the *Duck-coys* to their whole Family: But even thoſe who have miſt of this influence over the *minds* of their Husbands, have yet had it over their *Purſes*, and out of them ſupported the *Rabbies* of the Faction; who in gratitude to thoſe wiſe *Abigails* give their Husbands the *title*, and perhaps wiſh them the fate of *Nabal*. And God knows, how many men have thus been made contributers to the *cauſe* they have moſt deteſted, maintain'd that *fire* which thoſe *Incendiaries* have kindled in the Holy place; *Money* being no leſs the *ſinews* of Eccleſiaſtical than Secular *War*.

The great neglect of catechizing hath eminently contributed to our Diviſions.

6. Thus we ſee how the *Idleneſs* even of the moſt inconſiderable perſons has at the rebound been extremely *pernicious* to the Church, which like a *Clock* or *Watch* may be diſorder'd by the *ruſt* of the leaſt *Pin*; how much more then, by that of the *main wheels and ſprings*? If Negligence in *lay-callings* have though but an oblique, yet ſo inauſpicious an Influence, the like Neglect in *Eccleſiaſtick* muſt needs have a worſe, becauſe more immediate and direct. And would to God we could ſay this had been wanting to the compleating the miſchief: But alas, many of thoſe who are called to labour in the *Lord's Vineyard*, ſeem to have forgot their Errand, and ſtand there all the day *Idle* (a much worſe ſight than to have ſeen them ſo only in the *Market-place*;) ſo that I fear there is too evident ground of ſaying, that the *ſlight execution* of the Paſtoral Office, has been *one* of the moſt eminent Contributers to our diſtractions. And among *all the parts* of that Charge, none has been more generally, or more perniciouſly neglected than that of *Catechizing*; the want whereof has left People ſo unbottom'd, that like a *houſe* built on the *ſand*, every Wind of Doctrine blows down that Faith which they only profeſt, but underſtood not. This is that which has made ſo many *unſtable Souls*, as S. *Peter* obſerves, 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. to be the proper prey of Deceivers. And God knows, we may from ſad experiment confirm the note. I wiſh the ſame *Negligence* do not again evidence it ſelf by the ſame *effects*: But beſides this, which is part of the *Publick* Miniſtry, (and deſervedly is ſo, being uſeful to the whole Church, the Aged as well as Children) there are *private* Intercourſes between Paſtor and People which are of *great uſe*, would God they were of *equal practice*: We know a *careful* Shepherd does not only turn his *flock* into a *common Paſture*, and then think he has done his work, but does with a particular advertence obſerve the *thriving* of every one of them, takes notice of their ſingle *ſtrayings* and *diſeaſes*, and accordingly applies himſelf to reduce or cure them, and ſurely the like care is full as neceſſary in the *ſpiritual* Shepherd; 'tis not the *counſel* which is promiſcuouſly diſpenſed in a Sermon (and whereof 'tis odds every man takes that which is leaſt proper for him) that will do the *buſineſs*: Converts come not in now as in S. *Peter*'s days, in throngs and ſhoals, a more diſtinct and particular application is now neceſſary; men muſt be treated with apart, their particular *wants* diſcern'd, and *applications* accordingly made of *inſtructions*, *reproof* or *comfort*, and 'tis

theſe appropriate *Medicines*, that are like to make *ſound flocks*. Had Miniſters generally beſtowed more *pains* this way, they might probably have fruſtrated the *attempts* of Seducers, who could not ſo eaſily have inſinuated themſelves into the people, had they found them thus prepoſſeſt: but while theſe with all the arts of a ſubtile *induſtry* infuſe their *poiſons* into every one they meet, nothing but the like *diligence* in adminiſtring *Antidotes*, is like to countermine them. How much of that has been us'd I ſhall leave to the Conſciences of concern'd perſons to determine. But beſides the *ill influence* the Paſtor's negligence has on the *People*, it has in reſpect of themſelves an immediate propriety to the advancing our debates, the *leiſure* which is thus acquir'd, being apt to betray *ſpeculative perſons*, to the ſtudy of thoſe *curious queſtions*, which are the great *diſturbers* of our Peace; and of thoſe that ſtudy them, ſo few keep themſelves in neutrality, that parties are ſtill fomented by it: Whereas were the *practical buſineſs* of their Charge throughly attended, the *remainder of time* would not be more than the *ſtudy* of the more ſolid, uſeful parts of Divinity would exact, and conſequently there would no *ſurplus* be left for thoſe *dangerous impertinencies, which*, as the Apoſtle ſays, *ſerve to no profit, but to the ſubverting of the hearers*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 14. But when our Watchmen *ſleep*, 'tis no marvel if they *dream* too, and entertain themſelves and others with thoſe *Fantaſtick Notions*, which the great day will manifeſt to have had nothing of *weight* and *reality*, beſides the Miſchiefs they wrought.

7. And indeed if we ſcan the *volumes* of thoſe vain Speculations, we ſhall have cauſe to conclude that Idleneſs has *created* as well as *fomented* them; and they had as well wanted Authors as Abetters, had men found themſelves more uſeful buſineſs: And that not only the extemporary *Chimæras of Fanaticks*, but the more elaborate *niceties of the Schools*, have been thus derived: We know *Air* poſſeſſes no *place*, where it firſt finds not a *vacuity*, nor could thoſe lighter *notions* have filled mens *brains*, had they found them prepoſſeſt with what was more *ſolid*: But when men wanted more *ſubſtantial work* for their Underſtandings, they were fain to employ them thus in making *Cob-webs*, of which they have made a worſe ſort of *Jewiſh* veil in the Sanctuary, and have now involved the *Goſpel* in greater Obſcurities, than the *Law* was before: Whence our *Bezaleels* and *Aholiabs* have been inſpir'd for this work I ſhall not determine; but ſure not from him whoſe Character S. *John* gives us (in peculiar reference to Goſpel-revelation) that that *he is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all*, 1 John 1. 5.

The leiſure hours of our Church-men ill imploy'd in the ſtudy and writing of Controverſies.

8. Thus we ſee even *Idleneſs* wants not its *operation*; but is productive of great and miſchievous *effects*; it being the unhappy *property* of that Vice, that it *ſupplants* it ſelf, and by a fatal *Antiperiſtaſis* makes men perniciouſly *active*; ſo that we may truly ſay *ſloth* has made more Buſineſs than *Induſtry*. I am ſure in this inſtance it has cut out work for many Ages, though of ſuch a kind, that we have little reaſon to wiſh that our *Lord* at his coming ſhould find us *ſo doing*: Yet for ought now appears, our *activity* is ſo wholly bent that way, that 'tis like to be the *only*, at leaſt the moſt *intenſe buſineſs* we ſhall be found at.

Idleneſs is oft a temptation to ſpend our time ill,

9. I might here take a very apt occaſion to declaim againſt Idleneſs, as the unhappy fountain of ſo great miſchiefs, but that is a *vice* that has been ſo often *arraign'd*, that I need not repeat thoſe *charges* which all Authors, Natural, Moral and Divine have laid againſt it. Let but this of its being the Original of *faction* be added, and there can be nothing wanting to render it a moſt *dangerous crime*: Yea, and a moſt *monſtrous* one too, that operates thus preternaturally, that *freezes* and yet *inflames* men at once,

and hath been the original of Faction, and occaſion of much miſchief to the Church.

ſtupefies and *enrages*: And yet alas, there is as much riddle in its *fate* as its *nature*: 'tis *hated*, and yet *embraced*; generally *decried*, and yet as generally *cheriſhed*: And though it have no *advocates*, has many *friends*. Would God men would at laſt be aſhamed to *be* what they are aſham'd to *own*, and by a diligent attendance on their proper buſineſs, ſecure themſelves firſt from doing *nothing*, and then from doing *ill*; the one being ſo cloſe an Attendant on the other, that 'tis ſcarce poſſible to ſever them. And God knows the Church finds too ſad proof of their connexion: *Idleneſs* having ſerv'd as *Aſhes* to keep alive that *fire* which has ſet her in *combuſtion*. Thus unhappily *paſſive* is ſhe in our diſorders, and *acceſſary* to all our Guilts and Puniſhments: All our peccant *humours* concur to her *diſeaſe*, and like a common *mark* ſhe receives *arrows* from all Quarters, we have ſeen how many *Contributers* there are to her *ruine*, every one whereof with a wanton cruelty (like *Cæſar*'s murderers) are ambitious to inflict *new wounds*, and to give her *Supernumerary deaths*; and whilſt ſhe is thus ſurrounded with *Aſſaſſines*, what can we expect, but that her preſent *languiſhings* ſhould end in *death*; that Chriſtian Religion now crumbled into ſo many *minute fractions*, ſhould like *duſt* be ſcatter'd, and irrecoverably diſſipated; and thus infallibly it muſt be, if either *God* do not miraculouſly countermine us, and do more *for* us than we can do againſt our ſelves, or we recover ſo much ſobriety, as to forbear to *Maſſacre* what we pretend to *Love*, and endeavour to bind up thoſe *wounds*, at which our own Souls are like to *Expire*.

CHAP. XIX.

The Concluſion drawn from all the Premiſſes.

The beſt and ſpeedieſt way for the healing our diſtractions, is to remove the occaſions thereof.

1. WE have hitherto examin'd the *effects* and *originals* of our contentions, and now the only remaining Enquiry is concerning the *ways* of redreſs. And that will exact no long diſquiſition. For as in *diſeaſes* 'tis ſaid, the knowing the *cauſe* is one half of the *cure*; ſo more eſpecially is it here, where the *remedies* are merely *privative*, and we are not to be healed by *external applications*, but only by *ſubſtracting* thoſe Humours which feed the Malady: There will therefore need no other *preſcription* than to adviſe the *exterminating* of all thoſe Paſſions and Intereſts which have appear'd acceſſary to our quarrels, which though they are become the publick *Epidemick diſeaſe*, yet as the *infection* did, ſo muſt the *cure* ariſe from ſingle perſons: For as we look not a *common Peſtilence* ſhould ceaſe without due care and manage both of the *ſick* and *ſound*: So neither can this *Church-plague* ever abate, but by the cure, or fortifying its *individual members*.

Every man ought in this caſe to examine and ſuſpect himſelf guilty rather than another.

2. Let every man therefore who has any way made himſelf a Party to theſe conteſts, ſeriouſly interrogate his own heart; what it is that has engag'd Him in them: If any of the *ſiniſter motives* before rehearſt, let him for a while ſhift the *Scene*, and inſtead of *accuſing others* as Oppoſites to Truth, *condemn himſelf* as an Enemy to Peace: Remembring that how juſt or important ſoever the *cauſe* be, it is not ſo to *him*; whilſt he ſerves his humors and deſigns under its covert. The *Philoſophers* in their darker notions of *Truth* could yet diſcern, that ſhe was not acceſſible to *any* who ſought her not purely for *her ſelf*, with ſincere and ſingle Intentions, and if ſhe entertain no *Pupils*, that are not ſo qualified, is it fit ſhe ſhould have *Guardians* and

Champions of a quite diſtant Temper? No, he that undertakes the defence of *Speculative* Verity, muſt firſt poſſeſs himſelf of that *practick* Truth the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks of, *Pſal.* 51. That *in the inward parts*, ſuch a ſimplicity and integrity of Purpoſe, as may ſupplant all thoſe indirect Aims, purge our every prejudice and paſſion, which may byaſs and pervert him; and by that time he has done *this*, 'tis odds but he will find a *new face of affairs*, and diſcern that many of thoſe things he ſo fiercely contended about, were either falſe or trivial; acquir'd their *conſiderableneſs* only from thoſe *magnifying perſpectives* of his own Luſts, through which he viewed them. However till he have thus denudated himſelf of all theſe *encumbrances*, he is utterly unqualified for theſe *Agones*: and how lawfully ſoever others may ſtrive, 'tis ſure he cannot, that does it upon ſo unlawful grounds, and therefore upon *pain* of loſing much more than a *corruptible crown* muſt *withdraw himſelf*. As for thoſe who can yet *acquit* themſelves from having fomented our Diſtractions, I ſhall not forbid them to look with great complacency upon it, but rather by conſidering how valuable a *piece of Innocency* it is, engage and encourage themſelves to *preſerve* it; and to that purpoſe jealouſly to examine the *firſt overtures* of a Temptation. When they find any *proneneſs* to immerſe in Faction, any unwonted *heat* towards a Diſſenter, to trace it to its *fountain* and *original*; nicely to obſerve whether it iſſue not from ſome of thoſe *envenom'd ſprings* forementioned, and make as much haſte to ſtop its *current*, as they would to impede the moſt *overwhelming inundation*; for ſuch 'twill infallibly prove to thoſe who indulge to its courſe. But as a *Turf* will at firſt cloſe the *breach*, which neglected becomes the *inlet* of a mighty *Torrent*: So had this *early vigilance* been us'd, it might with eaſe have prevented thoſe Diſtempers in *private* Breaſts, from whence the *general* Confuſion has ſprung. As it is, might but theſe two things be obtain'd, would but the Guilty *purge*, and the innocent *guard* themſelves, we might yet hope to ſee an *end* of our Diſcords: Not that I ſuppoſe it poſſible to extinguiſh *all dievrſity* of Opinions among men, who from their *differing faculties*, and other *guiltleſs occurrents*, may and will have their *judgments* ſeverally diſpos'd. But firſt, were *all*, who have upon the former culpable motives enter'd the liſts, *excluded*, we ſhould find they would amount to ſuch a number, that there would be *few left* to maintain the Combate. Nay, ſecondly, were it not for thoſe *concealed inducements*, there would ſcarce be any *Combate* to maintain, thoſe are the things that convey the *ſting* and *malignity* into our Differences, without thoſe we might diſſent, but not fall out; and ſhould no more be angry to ſee another *opine contrary to us*, than we are to ſee him of a *different ſtature*, or *complexion*. In fine, let us pretend what we will, 'tis the Carnality *within*, that raiſes all the Combuſtions *without*: This is the great *wheel* to which the Clock owes its *motion*, while the *pretext* of Truth and Piety is but like the *hand*, ſet indeed more conſpicuouſly, but directed wholly by the *ſecret movings* of the other. This, *this* alone is it which creates and continues our broils, and by a monſtrous conjunction of *Properties*, is it ſelf both *flame* and *fuel*: Nor can we doubt that from hence ſpring thoſe railing accuſations, we bring one againſt another, if we remember what S. *Jude* tells us, that the *Angel* brought them not even againſt the *Devil* himſelf, he could calmly manage a *diſpute* with the moſt execrable and provoking *adverſary*, becauſe his *Angelick nature* had none of that *carnal leaven* which ferments to the *ſouring* of ours, an evident Indication what it is that has rendred our arguings ſo invective, that *divinity* ſeems now an Artifice to elude *law* by daily patronizing thoſe *Libels*, which would elſe be obnoxious to *civil Juſtice*.

Men generally cheriſh their vices under the covert of Religion.

3. But I preſume there need no more be ſaid to evince this, which has, I fear, the atteſtation of too many conſciences, to be generally doubted; the *greater difficulty* will be, to perſwade the depoſiting of thoſe *luſts*, which though they are confeſtly the *Boutefeaus* among us, have yet by I know not what Faſcination ſo *endear'd* themſelves, that we tenaciouſly *retain* them in ſpight of all their appendent Miſchiefs; nay, we *cheriſh* and *foſter* them, and for that very purpoſe bring them under the *covert* of Religion. He that has but a *puny vice*, if he get it like *Joaſh* conceal'd and ſhelter'd in the *Sanctuary*, 'twill not only *live*, but *reign* too; put on a Port and Majeſty, and appear venerable upon the pretence of that Piety, whoſe Eſſence and Being it evacuates and undermines.

Religion is ſometimes made to countenance the fouleſt crimes.

4. Indeed ſin never arrives at ſo luxuriant a *growth* as when it roots in *hallowed ground*, which *Satan* ſo well knows, that he has ever been induſtrious to *plant* it in that *ſoil*. Thus we find he had introduced the moſt *brutiſh crimes* into the religion of the *Gentiles*, interwoven them into their Sacred *Rites* and *Myſteries*, till virtue and vice had changed names, and it became *piety* to the Wicked, and *profaneneſs* to be innocent. And when that groſs deceit became detected by *Goſpel-light*, when he could not in the ſame manner obtrude upon *Chriſtians*, he yet found the way to do it more obliquely, and by ſtarting theſe religious *quarrels*, gave it once employment and reputation to the moſt irreligious *vices*. For alas, what part of wild *fury* was there in the Heathen *Bacchanals*, which we have not ſeen Equall'd if not Exceeded by ſome *intoxicated zealots*? Or what *cruelty* in their moſt barbarous *rites*, which has not been match't by the *inhumanity* of diſſenting Chriſtians? So that upon a juſt ſcanning, all our ſplendid *pretence* of Sanctity is but an *emulation* of Gentile Impurity under a better name; and while we damn Heathens for their *Moral Virtues*, We are yet ſo ſtupid as to hope our ſelves to be ſaved by their *worſt Vices*.

The great end of Chriſtianity perverted by thoſe that contend about the pureſt profeſſion of it.

5. And now who that does enough *conſider* can think he can enough *bewail* this ſad ſtate of affairs? That Chriſtianity ſhould thus out-run it ſelf, and bring us round to *Gentiliſm* again, whilſt her profeſſors ridiculouſly contend for the *title* of the beſt Chriſtians, by *ſuch acts* as denominate them none at all. Thus have we inverted the *ſignificancy* of that *Sacred Name*, and made it ſerve only to upbraid the *contrariety* of *our practice*; ſo that *that* which was once the *Index* to point out all *Moral* and *Divine Virtues*, does now on the contrary mark out *that part* of the World, where *leaſt of them* reſide. This, This alone is the *prize* we have acquir'd with ſo much *ſweat* and *blood*, this the *Triumph* we have brought to our Religion, which indeed could never have ſunk to ſuch a *deſpicableneſs* by any Endeavours but our *own*; for ſo long as Chriſtianity waged *war* only with *foreign* enemies ſhe never miſt to be *victorious*, but ſince that theſe *inteſtine diſcords* have turn'd her force againſt *her ſelf*, *Bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos*, there is no poſſibility of ſucceſs, the mere *fight* implies a *defeat*, and the *ſwords* of all Parties meet in her *bowels*. 'Twas a paſſionate *expoſtulation* that *Julia* is ſaid to have us'd with her two ſons *Antonine* and *Geta*, whoſe animoſities having prompted them to *divide* the Empire, which they were joyntly to have *enjoyed*, ſhe askt them whether they would divide their Mother alſo; implying how much their *diſcords* had rackt and torn her. And ſure our *common Mother* may make a yet ſadder *complaint* of her Sons, by whoſe *unkind diſſentions* ſhe is ſo miſerably *mangled*, that ſhe may cry out with the *Pſalmiſt*, *My ſoul is among Lions, and I lye among the Children of men that are ſet on fire.*

6. And now if amidſt all our *importunate pretences* to Piety, there be indeed any ſuch thing among us, methinks it ſhould give us ſome *relentings*, make us ſadly conſider to what a deplorable *condition* we have brought that very *religion* on which we profeſs to hang all our *hopes*; and would God thoſe who are the moſt nearly concerned in this Contemplation would purſue it to the utmoſt; let them on the one hand ſet the moſt *glittering temptations* to Diſcord, and on the other let them view the *diſmal effects* of it, and then conſider at how *dear a rate* they gratifie a few *impotent Paſſions*. Can any man without horror think that his *thirſt* of glory has brought *diſhonour* to his Religion, and conſequently to his God; that his *curious enquiries* into things ſecret, has helpt to Evacuate the more *uſeful things* Revealed; or in ſhort, that his *purſuit* of his various *intereſts* and *appetites* has deſtroyed what was ſo incomparable more valuable, the *honour* of the Goſpel, the *unity* of the Church, and as many *ſouls* as have periſht by that ſcandal? 'Twas as infamous a Character of *inhumanity* as the very *Poets* could feign of *Diomedes*, that *he fed his horſes with man's fleſh*; but alas, that barbarity is here infinitely out-done, when men nouriſh far *worſe brutes*, their own unreaſonable *luſts*, with thoſe things that are moſt *ſacred*. Certainly were the vaſtneſs of this *guilt* throughly weighed, 'twould make men ſick of thoſe petty wretched *acquiſts* they have thus purchaſed, make them fling back this *price of bloud*, I ſay not with the ſame *deſpair*, but with as great *remorſe* and *deteſtation* as *Judas* did the *ſilver pieces* for which he ſold his Maſter. 'Tis ſure the crimes have too great an affinity, as in all other circumſtances, ſo eſpecially in this, that as the one *was*, ſo the other *is* moſt frequently the Guilt of an *Apoſtle*, I mean of thoſe to whom Chriſt has committed the diſpenſing of that Goſpel which they thus evacuate: And doubtleſs this is a conſideration of great enhanſement, as that which ſuperadds *treachery* to all the other peſtilent *ingredients* of the Crime; 'tis the *falſifying* the moſt important *truſt*; for under words of that ſignification we find the *office* of the Miniſtry every where repreſented in Scripture, as *Stewards*, *Ambaſſadors*, *Shepherds*, and conſequently the accounts of the ſin muſt ſwell ſo much the higher. For a Steward to *embezle* thoſe goods he undertakes to *manage*; an Ambaſſador to betray his Prince for whom he ſhould *negotiate*; a Shepherd to *worry* that Flock which he is ſet to *guard*, theſe are crimes that double their malignity from the quality of the Actors; and yet this is undeniably the Guilt of all *thoſe* whoſe *profeſſion* having devoted them to the *Church* have impiouſly chang'd the *Scene*, and devoted the Church to *them*, ſerv'd all their mean degenerous ends upon her; and as *Chirurgions* are ſaid ſometimes to deal with profitable Patients, kept open, nay widened her *wounds* for their own *advantages*.

We ought to bewail the multitude of our Diſtractions, and the hand we have had therein.

7. It has been the *Prieſt's Litany* as ancient as *Joel's* time, *Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach*; but now alas, who ſhall prevail with them to do that themſelves which they beg of God, to ſpare his people and his heritage; to proſtitute them no more to their own ſiniſter deſigns, nor by their vain and endleſs *contentions*, expoſe them as well to *ruine* as *contempt*. He were indeed a happy Orator that could in this effectually intercede with them, though one would think the *wonder* ſhould lie on the other ſide, and the only ſtrange thing be, that they ſhould either *need* or *reſiſt* ſuch a ſolicitation, it being ſo much the concern of all that ought, as well upon the ſcore of *advantage* as *duty*, to be dear to them; ſo that the *Church* may moſt aptly addreſs to theſe her *Sons* in the ſame form S. *Paul* does to the *Philippians*, when he conjures them to unity, *Phil.* 2. 1. *If therefore there be any conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love,*

and not proſtitute the peace and happineſs of the Church to our Paſſions and Intereſt.

love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil you my Joy that ye be like minded. And can it be poſſible for any who have taſted all or any of theſe, to think fit to wrangle them away? to exchange theſe divine *irradiations*, the Antepaſt and Emblem of Heaven, for thoſe bitter *diſſentions*, whoſe *Alpha* and *Omega*, their *original* and *end* are Hell, and do as lively repreſent as they certainly lead to the horror and confuſion of that land of Darkneſs?

To ſtudy the peace of the Church is highly commendable and praiſeworthy.

8. But if ſome mens appetites be ſo depraved, that they find more Melody in *diſcord*, than in the *harmony* of the Angelick Quires, yet even theſe can diſcern *Muſick* in a conſort of *Plaudite's*, and ſeldom miſs to be affected with thoſe *Eulogies* which are given themſelves; and therefore though they disjoyn the Apoſtle's motives, *Phil.* 4. 8. and will do nothing for virtue, yet they may be preſum'd more conſiderate of Praiſe: And God knows, in a wrong ſence they are too much ſo; and ſure, as we have already obſerved by it, have made no ſmall *contributions* to our *diſcords*: yet did they meaſure *Glory* by its right and proper *ſtandard*, they would find they have all this while courted a *ſhadow*, and that the *ſubſtance* will never be acquir'd by being *fomenters* of publick Miſchief; but the unhappineſs of it is, that our *Eccleſiaſtick* as our *Secular* Duelliſts abuſe themſelves with falſe notions of Honour, novel Opinions and ſubtile Queſtions they think atteſt the *pregnancy* and *acuteneſs* of their Underſtandings, and give them *reputation*; but alas, how vain an imagination is this? Who admires the *Sagacity* of the Viper, that eats her way through her *mothers bowels*? Or who reverences a man for the *ſharpneſs* of that Sword wherewith he commits his *Parricide*? Nay, what more infamous brands have Records of all Ages ſtuck upon any, than thoſe who were *Ingenioſiſſimè nequam, & facundi malo publico*, who us'd the beſt Parts to the worſt Ends, and with the greateſt *cunning* and *artifice* have contrived their *miſchiefs*?

Small credit for any man to employ his wit or parts to the prejudice of the Church.

9. But could we abſtract from theſe *pernicious effects*, and ſuppoſe that this *exerciſe* of their Faculties were *innocent*, yet ſure it would be too *light* and *impertinent* to become *matter of praiſe*. He that ſhould ſpend all his Time in *tying* inextricable Knots, only to baffle the Induſtry of thoſe that ſhould attempt to *unlooſe* them, would ſure be thought not much to have ſerv'd his generation. 'Tis one of the certaineſt *Eſtimates* we can make of a man, to meaſure him by the *employments* he chuſes, if thoſe be *ſlight* and *trifling*, they ſuggeſt the Perſon to have *low thoughts*: What an abaſement of Majeſty was it thought in *Nero* to become a *Fidler* and *Stage-player*? And *Herodian* tells us, that men hoped no longer for any thing princely from *Commodus* the Emperor, when he had once liſted himſelf among the *Fencers*, and inſtead of the magnificent *ſtiles* of this Predeceſſors derived from the *conqueſts* of great and populous Nations, aſſumed This, *The vanquiſher of a thouſand Gladiators*: And certainly 'tis no leſs a deſcent and diminution for thoſe who were deſign'd by God for the *higheſt atchievments*, the ſubduing the Kingdom of Satan, and pulling down his ſtrong Holds, to devote themſelves to theſe ſo much *ignobler conteſts*, and account their *conqueſts*, not from the number of *Souls* won to God, but of *Oppoſers* worſted in Argument. Indeed, as we before obſerv'd, they have now rendred the *Church* a kind of *Theatre*, Diſputes are manag'd with ſuch Sleight and Sophiſtry, that at the beſt, the *Litigants* do but ſet forth a ſhew of *Fencers*: 'Twere well if they did not ſometimes play the *Gladiators*, by that wounding deadly ſharpneſs they uſe. And 'twould be conſider'd what a change is now made: In the Primitive times, none that own'd any *relation* to the Church were allowed to be *ſpectators* of thoſe Games, now that is made

the *Stage*, and her ableſt Perſons the *Actors*. But certainly 'tis very little to the reputation of thoſe who have ſo unworthily debaucht both it and themſelves; and therefore to all other *diſſwaſives* we may add this of the *Uncreditableneſs*: For let men fanſie what they pleaſe of the *Glory* acquir'd in theſe opportunities of ſhewing their parts, the beſt that can be ſaid of them is, that *they uſe Wit fooliſhly*. A character whereof the one part devours the other, and leaves not ſo much as a mouthful of that *popular air* which theſe *Chamælions* gaſp after. In a word, though *vain glory* be a principle I ſhall commend to no man, yet in this caſe 'twere more tolerable if it would work the right way, put them upon what were really *praiſe-worthy*, and then ſure 'twould incline them rather to *cloſe* than *widen* the breaches of *Sion*. To inflict *wounds* on an unreſiſting Patient, is a thing that requires neither *courage* nor *skill*; Every man can do that who has but ill nature enough; but to *cure* them is an act at once of *Art* and *Mercy*, and entitles to the Praiſe of both: And therefore if any man's *eagerneſs* of Glory have made him over-ſee the *way* to it let him now at laſt recover his *wandrings*, and ſeek it in this one only proper *Method*.

10. But this is, I confeſs, a *Topick* of Perſwaſion fitter for *Philoſophers* than *Divines*, and I wiſh I may have urg'd it impertinently; it being much leſs ſhame for *me* to have done ſo, than for *them* to need ſuch an Argument. There is another more genuine and proper, derived from the nature of *diſtributive Juſtice*, which requires a man to do his *Utmoſt* to repair the *injuries* he has done to any; this is ſo ſtated a *rule*, that all our *Caſuiſts* juſtly preſs it in all caſes of damage: But are there not many of them, who while they ſo eagerly aſſert that *obligation* in other mens caſes, do as *David* did in the matter of the poor man's Lamb, ſeverely ſentence that *injuſtice*, whereof themſelves are more highly Guilty? To every ſuch I would ſpeak, in the words of *Nathan*, and ſay, *Thou art the Man*. Alas, ſhall every little *trifle* I purloin from my Neighbour have *weight* enough to ſink me to the *abyſs*? and ſhall *thefts* of the greateſt magnitude, the robbing God of his *honour*, the Church not only of her *Patrimony*, but her *Peace*, and the World of thoſe ineſtimable *benefits*, which from an uniform conſonant Chriſtianity were to have been tranſmitted to it; Shall theſe, I ſay, be ſo ſlight and inconſiderable, as not to hinder his aſcent to the hill of the Lord? Shall the leaſt *violence* I offer to the perſon of an enemy oblige me to *ſatisfaction*, and ſhall he rend and tear the *body* of his Saviour (who willingly expos'd his *natural* body only in tenderneſs to that *myſtical* one, which is thus violated) and ſhall this criminous *barbarity* exact no offers towards amends? Certainly no man can have *partiality* enough to think it, and if he do not, he is to remember himſelf indiſpenſably engag'd to take the ſame *courſe* he preſcribes to *others*, and with his utmoſt *induſtry* endeavour to repair the *injury* he has done.

We ought rather to repair thoſe Breaches which we have helpt to make.

11. And O that we might ſee this ſo eſſential a piece of *Juſtice* aſſum'd among us, that our impertinent *ſtrifes* might be ſuperſeded and all moulded into the one noble *Emulation*, who ſhall faſteſt unravel his own *miſchiefs*, and promote that *peace* he has hitherto diſturb'd. This indeed were worthy to be the united deſign of all learned men; and were it once ſo, who knows how proſperous it might be: For though ſome *ſingle attempts* have miſcarried, yet probably one great *cauſe* why they do ſo, was becauſe they were *ſingle*. When one Perſon comes with *pacifick arguments* to part an *enraged multitude*, let his Reaſons be never ſo convincing, they are not like to be much adverted to; the only *effect* is, that he who deſign'd himſelf the common *Friend*, is taken as the common *Enemy*; but

and all of us to concur and joyn therein as one man.

where many aſſociate in ſuch a deſign, and make a party for peace, their *numbers* give a conſiderableneſs to their *propoſal*, and prepare for their *ſucceſs*. And were there ſuch a *combination* in order to the Churches Quiet, it were more than poſſible they might undermine the *contrary attempts* of Faction and Diſcord.

The ſeveral diſſenting Parties among us ought to unite in thoſe wherein they all agree,

12. And why ſhould not every man be *ambitious* to make one in this ſo *pious a confederacy*, and reſolve moſt ſtudiouſly to endeavour the *compoſing* the Diſtractions of the Church, in which they may borrow ſomething of *inſtruction* even from their paſt guilts, and copy out their own *induſtry* to this better purpoſe. This is ſure; our *diſputes* had never ſo multiplied, had there not been a great deal of *unhappy diligence* in nouriſhing the ſeeds of them: Every *controverted Tenet* has been heightned and improved, till it have ſpawn'd a *numerous brood*, ſo that thoſe who at firſt *differ'd*, perhaps, but in ſome *few* things, wrangle on, till at laſt they *agree* in *fewer*: Now were the like Induſtry applied the *other way*, it might ſure do much to the changing the *whole Scene*. If men would as nicely obſerve the Principles of *agreement* between *diſſenting parties*, and with as much Art and Care ſeek to dilate and ſpread them; why might not they as much *overwhelm* our *Differences*, as they have been *overwhelmed* by them? 'Tis ſure that thoſe Univerſal *truths*, to which all Parties aſſent, are, as the *cleareſt* for their Evidence, ſo the moſt *important*, for their Conſequence: And why ſhould not *theſe*, if rightly managed, be a more enforcing *motive* to Unity, than the more *ſingular opinions* (perhaps fancies) of ſome men, can be to Diſcord? Certainly would but our *Moſes*'s try what this *rod* of *God* in their hand could do, they would find it able to devour all *thoſe* of the *Magicians*. Would they like *Benhadad*'s Ambaſſadors, catch hold of every amicable *expreſſion*, any thing that looks towards *Peace*, and cloſe in with it, they might probably ſee *Effects*, beyond what can at a diſtance be expected. For ſure, *Peace* is not ſuch a *dry Tree*, ſuch a ſapleſs unfertile thing, but that it might *fructifie* and *encreaſe* as well as *Diſcord*, were there a juſt care taken to cheriſh and nouriſh it.

and ſtudy our Differences with a mind inclin'd rather to compoſe than widen them.

13. Indeed this Deſign is the only *Amulet* which can render it ſafe to look into *controverſies*, which are elſe apt to infuſe a kind of *acrimony*, and *venome* into mens ſpirits; For we ſee many, whoſe *curioſity* at firſt brought them as unconcern'd *ſpectators*, do within a while engage with all earneſtneſs in the *conteſt*: But thoſe who ſtudy differences only with an aim of compoſing them, theſe have their thoughts determin'd and fixt, and ſo not left looſe to the enticement of any Party. *Ariſtotle* ſays, that on the Hill *Olympus* the Air is ſo ſubtil and piercing, that thoſe who aſcend thither, are forced to carry with them *wet Spunges*, by that *moiſture* ſomewhat to allay that extreme *tenuity* which otherwiſe would be deadly; and ſure they that deal in *controverſies*, live in no leſs *corroſive an Air*, and therefore had need make the like proviſion, and carry with them this *Pacifick purpoſe*, as a *Lenitive* and *Emollient* againſt the infectious *ſharpneſs* they will there meet with.

The victory over our Paſſions is preferable to all other conqueſts.

14. And now how bleſſed a thing were it, if we could once thus follow the things that make for Peace? That the *numberleſs mutual enmities* which are now among us, may all be reduced into *one*, that we may fight not againſt *ſingle Adverſaries*, but againſt *War* it ſelf, and contend againſt *nothing but contention*. And ſure our victory here were worthy millions of thoſe petty conqueſts wherewith men pleaſe themſelves, and which acquire them ſo little of real advantage, that the ſame account which was given of *Otho* and *Vitellius*, that the *war* would ſwallow up the one, and the *victory* the other, is too applicable to our *combatants*, who are like to be equally

ly unhappy in *defeat* or *ſucceſs*. The *Spartans* had an Order that when any of their *Generals* had compaſſed his deſign by *policy* or *treaty*, he ſhould ſacrifice an *Ox*, but when by *force* and *blood-ſhed*, a *Cock* only: From the diſtant values of which oblations *Plutarch* obſerves how much they preferr'd the Atchievements of calm and ſober *counſels*, before thoſe of *ſtrength* and *power*: But ſure the diſparity is more eminent in the preſent inſtance, where if we *fight* we *wound* our Brethren, but if we *unite* we *deſtroy* our Enemy, baffle and circumvent *Satan*'s Maſter-ſtratagem, and not only *worſt* but *outwit* him. Indeed this and this only is worth our Induſtry, whereas thoſe *little defeats* we give each other, are like thoſe in a civil War, wherein the *publick* is ſtill ſure to be a *Loſer*; upon which conſideration the *Romans* allowed not their Captains to triumph for ſuch Victories; and ſure our *Chriſtianity* is very ill beſtowed on us, if it have made us ſo much worſe natur'd as to chuſe thoſe ruinous Conqueſts *at home*, before the moſt glorious and profitable ones *abroad*.

Our Governours ought to perſwade their people to peace, and call them off from Contention;

15. 'Twas *Abner*'s admonition to *Joab*, when he was in a hot purſuit of the *Iſraelites* 2 *Sam.* 2. 26. *Shall the ſword devour for ever? knoweſt thou not that it will be bitterneſs in the latter end*? And ſure 'tis more than time for our Leaders to make the ſame reflection, and as *Joab* did there, call back the People from following their Brethren: Nay indeed, would they but attend, they might hear themſelves called back; the *great Captain* of their Salvation ſounding a *retreat* from theſe fatal skirmiſhes. *Xenophon* in the inſtitution of *Cyrus* tells us of one *Chryſanthus*, who in the heat of battel had his hand lift up to *ſtrike* an Enemy, but hearing in the very inſtant the Trumpet ſound a *retreat*, *ſtopt* his blow. A great ſobriety of *courage*, ſo to ſhew more Zeal to the *obeying* his General, than the *annoying* his Enemy; and an Inſtance of much *reproach* to our *Spiritual Combatants*, who have ſhewed themſelves ſo much worſe diſciplin'd, as in ſpight of daily repeated *calls* to Peace, ſtill to *Purſue* their Hoſtility: But ſure ſuch an *inſolence* is ſo inconſiſtent with the *pretence* they make of fighting God's Battels, that they muſt either *reform* the one, or *diſclaim* the other.

and to bewail the miſchiefs which they cannot redreſs;

16. And now if after all that hath or can be ſaid of the *obligation*, *neceſſity* or *advantages* of Peace, we are put to the Pſalmiſt's Complaint, *That there are ſtill thoſe that will make them ready to battel*: If men are of ſo untreatable a Temper, that nothing can be obtain'd of them; what remains for thoſe that are Peaceable and Faithful in *Iſrael*, but to *bewail* thoſe Miſchiefs they cannot *redreſs*? If the Church muſt periſh, at leaſt to give her Funeral-rites, and if they cannot quench her *flames*, yet do bedew her *aſhes* with their *tears*. 'Tis true, we cannot yet ſay ſhe is quite *dead*; but though ſhe *breaths*, yet in a few pious peaceful Souls, yet like a *Palſied perſon*, ſhe ſcarce *moves* a Limb, ſhe wants vigour to actuate the generality of her profeſſors, and remains rather a *trunk* than a *body*: And ſure if there be truth in that Phyſical Aphoriſm, which ſays, That *diſeaſes which croſs the temper and conſtitution of the Patient are moſt dangerous*; we may well conclude her *deſperate*, there being nothing more repugnant to the very Elements and Principles of her being, than thoſe contentions under which ſhe now *groans*.

and implore the aid of our ſpiritual Phyſician for the curing of our Diſtempers.

17. Yet there is an *omnipotent Power* to whom no difficulties are inſuperable, an *unerring Phyſician* who makes the moſt hopeleſs Diſeaſes, but the Triumph of his Art. O let us reſort to him, and invite his Aids in the ſame pathetick form, wherewith he was ſolicited for *Lazarus*, *Jo.* 11. 3. *Lord behold ſhe whom thou loveſt is ſick*: She for whoſe ſake thou enduredſt ſuch contradiction of *ſinners* againſt thy ſelf, is now by the contradiction

of her own *Children*, languiſhing and expiring, ſhe for whom thou pouredſt out *thy blood*, lies weltring in her *own*; Lord, ſave or ſhe periſheth: Were ſuch Petitions enforced and ingeminated by the daily breathings of humble devout hearts, who knows how prevalent they might be? In this ſence alſo *Heaven* might ſuffer *violence*; nor is there any better countermine to all the *outrages* acted upon Earth than by making them thus reverberate in our *cries* and *prayers*.

Few lay to heart the diſtractions of the Church, or intercede to God on her behalf.

18. And perhaps *this* Conſideration will draw us all, even the moſt *peaceful* of us into the *guilt* of a negative Acceſſarineſs to the preſent Miſchiefs. There are divers that diſlike our *contentions*, and blame the *abettors*; but yet with ſuch Unconcern'dneſs and Indifferency, as that wherewith we commonly talk of the *combuſtions* of foreign States, wherein we rather expreſs our *Judgment* than our *reſentments*, and do make it more our *diſcourſe* than our *concern*. And even of thoſe who have in ſome degree laid it to heart, who is there that has not been ſome way wanting in the ardency, or frequency of his interceſſions? Let every one ſeriouſly interrogate his own Heart, and I fear 'twill witneſs to him, that his own *private concerns* are much apter to excite his *devotions*. Let us remember with what *paſſion* and *importunity* we invoke God in our particular Exigents, and conſider whether *we* are equally affected with *thoſe* of the Church: Haſt thou been like *Hezekiah*, ſick unto death? And haſt thou with him wept ſore, and vehemently ſolicited a recovery? Has thy *eſtate* been invaded by Oppreſſion, thy *fame* by Slander and Detraction? And haſt thou with loud and earneſt cries, appealed to that *God to whom vengeance belongs*? Or haſt thou been in that condition which is proverbial for ſetting men to their prayers? Haſt thou like *Jonas* been in a ſtorm, in minutely expectation of being ſwallowed up by the *waves*, if not the *Whale*; and in this Ecſtaſie of fear, when as *thy Soul was*, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *even melted away becauſe of the Trouble*, haſt cried unto the Lord, and even out-nois'd the billows in thy clamorous importunities for aid? Haſt thou in all, or any of theſe eſtates been thus affected for thy ſelf? Then remember whether thy *reſentments* have been proportionable for *that* which is much better than thy ſelf. If the no leſs imminent and preſſing dangers of the Church, have not as much awakened thy *fervor*, given as ſharp and piercing an *accent* to thy Prayers, thou muſt needs confeſs, thou haſt fall'n ſhort of what thou ſhouldeſt and mighteſt have done towards her reſcue.

We ought to cry mightily to God, and deprecate thoſe judgments that are upon us;

19. And if this Inquiſition be *impartially* made, who among us can plead *Not guilty*? And therefore in reflections upon our paſt omiſſions, we are *in juſtice* oblig'd to redouble our Zeal, to ſay over again our *Tepid heartleſs prayers*, and inflame them with a *Coal* from the Altar; an earneſt affectionate Concern for all that is holy, ſuch as may prompt us to cry, and that mightily to God: We ſee the *Ninevites* could do it when there was no viſible approach of *danger*, but merely upon the *preſage* of a Stranger Prophet, backt with the *conſciouſneſs* of their own Guilt: I fear we more than equal them in the *latter* Motive, I am ſure we far exceed them as to the *former*. The *miſeries* we are to deprecate being not only under denunciation and threat, but actually upon us, though withal ſo improveable, that after all the *black Catalogue* our Experience brings in, our Fears meet us with the *bottomleſs Prophetick menace*, Eſay 5.25. *For all this his Anger is not turn'd away, but his hand is ſtretched out ſtill.* 'Tis the uſual Oeconomy of divine Juſtice to make our *Crimes* our *Puniſhment*, and to give us up to *thoſe ills* which were at firſt, our own *depraved choice*: And God knows, we have too much reaſon to fear this may be our caſe: That we

who have ſo perverſly violated all the *bands* of Unity, wantonly wrangled our ſelves out of all *inclinations* to Peace, ſhould never be able to reſume them; that all thoſe *gentle breathings* of Grace, by which *exaſperated Paſſions* are to be cool'd and tempered, ſhould be withdrawn, and we finally be given up to be diſſipated by thoſe Whirl-winds our ſelves have rais'd: That *Chriſtianity* which we have made the Stale and Property to our irregular *appetites*, us'd only as *fig-leaves* to hide our *ſhame*, ſhould wither and ſhrink into nothing; and that *we* who could not agree in what manner to *retain* it, ſhould at laſt too well agree to *renounce* it.

and beſeech the Divine Goodneſs to heal our very unwillingneſs to be healed.

20. This alas, as it is the *fearfulleſt*, ſo is it the *probableſt* Iſſue of our wild Contentions, ſuch as nothing but the miraculous Effluxes of divine *Clemency* can avert. O let us with all the *groans* and *tears*, ſo deplor'd a Condition exacts, addreſs thither, importune the *father of Mercies* to pity *us*, who know not how to pity *our ſelves*, and that though we have caſt off *all bowels*, yet that we may find them all concenter'd *in him*: That he will heal our *wounds*; and which of all other is the moſt deſperate, our *unwillingneſs* to be healed: That the *Spirit of Peace* may over-ſhadow us, and impreſs on us the *Dove-like qualities* of Meekneſs and Gentleneſs: That he would reſcue our Religion from our Profanation, not by taking it from Us, but by conforming *us* to It: Finally that he would do for us, not only above what we can *ask* or *think*, but beyond what we would *wiſh* or *chuſe*, and not ſuffer us to *acquire* the Miſeries we ſo eagerly *purſue*.

We ſhould qualifie our ſelves for this Interceſſion by Univerſal Holineſs and Purity of Life.

21. This *divine interpoſition* alone is it that can poſſibly ſecure us, and indeed the ſuit amounts to no leſs, than that he will *force* upon us the Bleſſings we *reſiſt*, and do us good againſt our wills, which is ſo bold a *requeſt*, that they had need be more than ordinary Favourites that ſhall prefer it. Thoſe hands muſt be very pure, that are lift up in ſuch an *interceſſion*: And therefore all that undertake it are obliged to qualifie themſelves for it, by purging out not only the *leaven* of Malice and Strife, but all other *filthineſs* of the Fleſh and Spirit: Without this, we can never approve our ſelves to intercede in earneſt; for what can be more ridiculous than to deprecate the *ruine* of Chriſtianity by the *contentions* of other men; when our ſelves contrive it by ſome other vice of our own? This is not to deſire it ſhould *live*, but that none but we ſhould *kill* it. 'Twill therefore concern thoſe who wiſh the *Peace* of the Church, to examine whether they do as much project for her *Purity*; otherwiſe 'tis a mockery to pretend ſuch a *jealous tenderneſs* for her. We have ſeen there are more ways than one, by which Chriſtian practice may be evacuated, and it matters little from whence that wind blows that ſhipwracks our Piety. Yet 'tis not to be denied that of all thoſe *tempeſtuous blaſts*, this of our *contentions* is the roughеſt and moſt fatal. 'Tis indeed not a ſingle guſt, but an encounter and ſtrugling of ſeveral contrary winds; and God knows no *poetical deſcription* can out-do the *horror* of the ſtorms they have raiſed; yet for ought I diſcern, there is nothing that is leſs vulgarly accuſed, which I muſt account to the Reader, as the *cauſe* why I have detain'd him ſo long upon this Head; and given it a *length* ſo unproportionable to the *preceding* parts of this Diſcourſe.

CHAP. XX.

THE CLOSE.

A ſerious and pathetick exhortation to peace, and the uſe of all thoſe means whereby it may be attain'd.

WE have now ſeen the unhappy riddle of the *Unchriſtianneſs* of Chriſtians unfolded, have obſerv'd the *Originals* and *Cauſes* of That which is too notorious to all the world in its *Effects*. And though in this curſory view the *Reader* is not to think he has any ſuch *complete diſcovery*, as ſhould ſuperſede his own *farther inquiſition*, yet as it may ſerve to *awaken*, ſo ſomewhat to *aſſiſt* his Induſtry, give him ſome light and inſight into the wiles of Satan: And by branding ſome of the chief of thoſe *cheats* which have robb'd us of our *Piety*, prepare for the detection of the *whole Confederacy*: In the interim this *Specimen* may ſerve to ſtop his wonder at the *ruinous eſtate* of Chriſtianity, for though 'tis true that it was compacted of all the moſt *incorruptible materials*, had all the *harmony* of parts which the moſt exact *Frame* and *compoſure* could give it, and ſo was qualified both for *ſtrength* and *beauty*, to have defied all the injuries of Time; yet while ſhe has ſo many *Underminers*, 'tis not ſtrange to ſee her in the *duſt*, there being no *one* of theſe, eſpecially that I laſt inſiſted on, which has not deſtructive *efficacy* enough, firſt to *deface*, and then to *ruine* her.

2. But it is but an unprofitable acqueſt to know the *Authors* of our miſchiefs if we ſtop there, this enquiry being matter not of mere *Curioſity*, but of the neareſt and moſt preſſing *Intereſt*: We ſearch not after Malefactors for their *acquaintance*, but for their *puniſhment*, and our own *ſecurity*; and all our diſcoveries of this kind are vain, if we apply them not to that purpoſe. Let me therefore conclude with this *earneſt Petition* to the Reader, That he will not to all the *native* Defects of this *diſcourſe*, add this *accidental* one, that it ſhall be perfectly *impertinent*; a mere waſte of his Time and my own; which it will inevitably *prove*, if it engage him not in an *earneſt proſecution* of thoſe *Delinquents* it hath impeacht; and in as earneſt an endeavour to repair the *Miſchiefs* they have wrought.

3. In ſhort, let every man depoſit what he has here read, not with his *memory* only, but his *conſcience*, let him there ſeriouſly ponder the Excellency of that *holy vocation*, as S. *Paul* terms it, *Eph.* 4. 1. *to which he is call'd*: And then as ſeriouſly conſider, *whether he have*, as the Apoſtle there exhorts, *walked worthy of it*; if he find he have not (as alas, who is there that has?) Let him ſearch out as the *particulars*, ſo the *cauſes* of his Miſcarriages: Diligently ſift out thoſe Fallacies of *Satan*, or his own *heart*; thoſe ſly Deluſions which have made him act thus prepoſterouſly againſt all the Convictions of common *reaſon*, natural *conſcience*, or Chriſtian *experience*; and when he has diſcovered, let him make no delay to reſcue himſelf from their *Treacheries*, but manfully break thoſe *withs* and *cords* (which are too weak to hold any that will but in earneſt remember, he is a *Nazarite*, a Perſon conſecrate to God) reſolutely reſiſt the *inſidious careſſes* of thoſe *Dalilahs* which will deliver not *Himſelf* only, but the *Ark* to the *Philiſtines*. Nor is he to content himſelf with his own *ſingle eſcape*, but to propagate the *deliverance* to as many as he can; let him blazen and ſtigmatize thoſe *Impoſtors* (for 'tis a *combining* with them, to *conceal* them) warn and caution *others* againſt thoſe jugling Artifices, by which *himſelf* was entrapped, and make his own ſhip wracks a *Sea mark* for the ſecuring the courſe of other Paſſengers. This is the *Effect* of Chriſt's admonition to S. *Peter*, *When thou art converted ſtrengthen thy brethren*; and a piece of that Fraternal charity we all

owe to every particular Soul, to whom we have opportunity to diſpence it.

4. But beſides that *private* Obligation, it becomes a duty upon a higher, and more *publick* account, it being the only way to take off that *Scandal* we have brought upon our *Religion*; which as it was not contracted by the *irregularities* of one, or two perſons, but by aſſociated and *common crimes*; ſo neither will it be removed by a few ſingle, and private *Reformations*; there muſt be combinations, and publick *Confederacies* in *Vertue*, to balance and counterpoiſe thoſe of *Vice*, or ſhe will never recover that priſtine honour which ſhe acquired by the general Piety of her Profeſſors. In thoſe primitive days there was ſuch an abhorrence of all that was Ill, that a *vicious perſon* was lookt on as a kind of *Monſter* or *Prodigie*, and like a putrified Member cut off, as being not only *dangerous*, but *noiſom* to the Body: But alas, the Scene is ſo chang'd that the *Church* is now made up of *ſuch* as ſhe would then have *caſt out*; and 'tis now as remarkable an Occurrent to find a *good* Chriſtian, as it was there to ſee a *bad*: And ſince every thing is eſtimated not according to its rare and caſual, but frequent uſual Operations, 'tis eaſie to conclude, that *Chriſtianity* has loſt as much in its *Repute*, as it appears to have done in its *Efficacy*: Nor will there be any way of repairing it, till We be generally rendered ſo malleable to its *impreſſions*, that our Lives may atteſt its *Force* and *Energie*.

5. Nay indeed 'tis not only its *honour*, But its *being* is concern'd in it; active Principles ceaſe to *be* when they ceaſe to *act*. You cannot hinder the fire to burn but by putting it out: And to *ſuppreſs* the Operation of our Religion is indeed to *extinguiſh* it; at leaſt to deprive it of its proper and ſpecifick act: So that if it can be ſaid to be; 'tis only by that abuſe of ſpeech which calls a dead or painted man, a Man: It may perhaps be a *vizor* for the Hypocrite, a *Stale* for the Ambitious, a *waſh* or *tincture* for the Covetous; but where it is *theſe*, *it* ceaſes to be it *ſelf*. The *eſſence* and *being* of Chriſtianity is *practice*; and according to that Teſt and proof thereof, where almoſt can it be ſaid to Exiſt in the world? We have indeed ſome images and ſhadows of it: Some have taken its *picture*, but the *ſubſtance* and *ſolid body* is vaniſhed, reſolv'd into Air, and ſeems ſadly to have moralized the poetick Fable of *Sibyll*'s being worn into a voice, *we have turn'd it into a mere noiſe and ſound*; nay, which is worſe, into an *Echo*, that flattering complying voice, which reverberates every man's own language to him: Men dictate to their *Religion*, and then will needs perſwade themſelves and others, that their Religion dictates to them, will have the *rebounds* of their own Fancy or luſt paſs for Divine *Oracles*; ſo ſuborning this Aery fantaſtick Chriſtianity to legitimate thoſe practices, which the real ſolid one forbids and execrates.

6. To this diſmal forlorn eſtate have we brought that which was deſigned to bring us to bliſs; herein far exceeding the barbarity of the brutiſh *Sodomites*, they would have violated the Meſſengers of their *ruine*, but we thoſe of our *ſafety*: We having not only neglected, but vilified and reproacht the *Embaſſie* ſent us from *Heaven*, and inſtead of *embracing* that purity and peace it recommended to us, have done our Parts to make it *forgotten* that ever it was ſent upon any ſuch Errand; and indeed ſo it is like to be, if ſome *Heroick piety* do not revive its *Memory*, and teach us to record it not ſo much in our *books* as *lives*: There, and there only it will be univerſally legible; there it would indeed appear, what it is in its own nature, *the power of God unto Salvation*.

7. And now why ſhould we not all Emulouſly contend, who ſhall firſt put off that *ugly Vizor* we have put upon our Religion, and reſtore it to its *native form?* eſpecially conſidering that with its *Beauty* we loſe its *Dowry* too; forfeit all thoſe glorious *Rewards* which it promiſes to them that preſerve it *immaculate.* 'Tis only a *pure* and *undefiled Religion* that will inveſt us in thoſe *white robes*, wherein we are to follow the *Lamb.* And ſure thoſe who have here endeavoured to *darken* and *extinguiſh* all the rays of Spiritual Light, that have lived as if they profeſt Chriſtianity merely in ſpight to *defame* it, muſt never hope it ſhall bring them to *ſhine as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father*, or procure them the *reward* of blameleſs Souls. No, it promiſes no other *Crown* than that of *Righteouſneſs*, and therefore they that want the *Righteouſneſs*, muſt want the *Crown* alſo; Nay, beſides that ſo ineſtimable a Reverſion they loſe all thoſe *preſent joys* and *ſatisfactions* which true Chriſtian practice would afford them, and which both in reſpect of the *intenſeneſs* and *duration*, infinitely exceed the moſt *profuſe ſenſualities* the World ever taſted.

8. Theſe are intereſts that are ſure Important enough, and yet we muſt be *wooed* to conſider them, nay, that does not prevail neither, but with a perverſe Coyneſs we *hold off*; all the ſolicitations and importunate *Calls* of God are lookt upon as *Artifices* and *Deſigns*, as if he had ſome Ends of his own to ſerve upon us, and (as the *Corinthians* ſuſpected S. *Paul*) meant to make a gain of us; we treat with him as if he were the Perſon to be advantaged, and barter for *Heaven* with ſuch an Indifference, as if *It* would want Us more than *We* It; never conſidering that 'tis impoſſible for him to have any other *Concern*, than that which his *Compaſſion* to us creates, and the more *earneſt* and *paſſionate* That is, the more it ſhould excite our own *care*, it being the extremeſt degree of perverſe Folly, to *abandon* and *deſpiſe* our own Intereſt merely becauſe a Friend or Patron *conſiders* and *prizes* it. And this *brand* muſt lie upon every one of us, who ſtill refuſe to diſcern *the things that belong to our Peace*, after God has done ſo much to render them not only *viſible* but *attainable.*

9. What ſhall I ſay more, but conclude with Chriſt's paſſionate *wiſh*, that *we might in this our day, underſtand the things that belong to our Peace*; and O that the *Spirit* of Peace and Light would deſcend among us, illuminate us with that true *practical Wiſdom*, which may convince us, that our *Duty* and *Intereſt* are the ſame thing under ſeveral forms, and that while we impiouſly caſt off the *one*, we do as fooliſhly betray the *other.* That ſo thoſe *ineſtimable advantages* our Chriſtianity gives towards both, may not be thus madly loſt, ſerve only *as a price in the hand of a fool, who hath no heart to it*, *Prov.* 17. And to this end let us humbly and earneſtly invoke the Father of lights to *illuminate* all thoſe whom the God of this world hath *blinded*, that after he hath ſent into the world the *Image* of this own eternal brightneſs, cauſed the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* ſo long to ſhine upon us, it may not ſerve only to involve us in that moſt *dreadful condemnation*, which awaits thoſe who love darkneſs more than light; but that anſwering the purpoſe of our *holy calling*, walking as *Children of light*, we may vindicate that *Chriſtian profeſſion* which we have ſo defamed, ſecure to our ſelves the light of *God's countenance* here, and that of his *glory* hereafter.

FINIS.

PRIVATE DEVOTIONS REFERRING To the ſeveral parts of the before-going Treatiſe.

TO THE READER.

It is to be hoped that as this Treatiſe has entertain'd many; it has alſo had an effect much more deſirable, though leſs comprehenſive, to mend and convince ſome. And whilſt it gave an account of the general DECAY OF CHRISTIAN PIETY *in the* Preſent *Age; has alſo invited a few at leaſt, to its purſute and ſervice. Upon theſe hopes, the* Author *has been perſwaded to add this ſhort* Specimen *of* PRIVATE DEVOTIONS, *that if the ſober and conſidering Reader ſhall at any time find his heart toucht and ſoftned, he may have in readineſs wherewith to actuate his holy flames, and aſſiſt him in his addreſſes to the Throne of Grace.*

PRIVATE DEVOTIONS.

Referring to the ſeveral parts of the before-going Treatiſe.

O BLESSED Lord, who art infinitely holy and happy in thy ſelf, and from whom alone we derive the poſſibilities of being either; we proſtrate our ſelves before thee, in an humble adoration of thy abundant goodneſs, and a juſt confuſion at our own deteſtable ingratitude: We were aliens and enemies to thee by our corrupt affections, and ungodly works, yet even to us haſt thou been reconciled, nay bought the atonement with the precious blood of thy dear Son: Thou haſt ſent him to be the propitiation for our ſins; and (which is no leſs mercy) to be the ſubduer of them too; ſenteſt him by his divine Example and admirable Precepts, to bleſs us in turning every one of us from his iniquities. Thou haſt given us a Law ſo perfect, ſo excellent, as renders our obediences their own reward, and yet ſuperaddeſt alſo an eternal weight of glory to be its future retribution: And leſt our brutal temper ſhould not be attracted by all this, thou haſt hedg'd up our way with thorns, annext a preſent uneaſineſs, and ſubſequent danger to our deviations, ſo by the menaces of Hell eſſaying to fright us into Heaven: And to actuate and enliven all theſe methods, thou addeſt the internal aſſiſtances of thy Grace and Spirit to excite us to good, to reſtrain and avert us from ill, and finally advance us to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt. And now, O Lord, after all theſe obligations, all theſe aids, what manner of perſons ought we to be, in all holy converſation and godlineſs? But alas, to our eternal reproach, we have ſignaliz'd our ſelves by contrary practice; blaſphem'd that holy Name whereby we are call'd, and by our enormous lives, ſcandaliz'd our profeſſion, and made it as eminent for vice, as it ſhould have been (and once was) for virtue. Our knowledge of thy Will ſerves only to inform us, wherein we may moſt oppoſe it; and while we call our ſelves Chriſtians, we commit ſuch things as are not ſo much as named among the Gentiles. Nay, O Lord, ſo little do we retain of the power of Godlineſs, that the greateſt part of Men have now caſt off the very form, deny the Lord that bought them, trample upon all that is ſacred; and not only think but loudly ſay there is no God. Thus inſtead of regulating our manners by our faith, we model our faith by our manners, and reap nothing by our Chriſtianity, but the guilt of Apoſtaſie, and the fearful expectation of that fiery indignation which awaits thoſe who have thus trampled underfoot the Son of God, and done deſpite to the Spirit of Grace: And now, O Lord, when the foundations are caſt down, what can the righteous do? What counterpoiſe can the groans and tears of thoſe few who mourn in *Sion*, be to ſuch general, ſuch daring impieties? Yet, O God, thou haſt in all Ages ſtrangely condeſcended to the interceſſion of thy Servants. O bow thy Heaven again and come down, and hear the prayers of thoſe who deſire to fear thy name: And let them not only deliver their own Souls, but obtain mercy for this perverſe generation even ſuch a mighty grace as may yet reduce us. O thou who didſt at firſt call us out of Darkneſs into thy marvellous light, recall us now from that worſe darkneſs, wherein we have involved our ſelves, put thy Laws a-new in our hearts, and write them in our minds: And after ſo many Years, ſo many Ages of being call'd Chriſtians; let us at laſt begin to be ſo. Revive, O Lord, that Primitive zeal and ſanctity, which may purifie us to thy ſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works. And O thou bleſſed Mediator, who prayedſt for thy firſt crucifiers, intercede alſo for us, who have under the name of Diſciples crucified thee afreſh: And though we have nothing to ſay for our ſelves, cannot pretend that we knew not what we did; yet let thy ſtripes and wounds, thy croſs and paſſion plead for us. Thou didſt once lead captivity captive, O ſtir up thy ſtrength again, and let not Satan now triumph in thy ſpoils, and deſecrate thy Church which thou haſt purchaſed with thine own blood. O let thy bleſſed Spirit breath again upon us, that even theſe dry bones may live in thy ſight: Let him ſo effectually convince and reprove, illuminate and excite us, that we may cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, walk worthy of that holy vocation wherewith we are called, and be capable of thoſe glorious rewards which are prepar'd for thoſe who fight a good fight, finiſh their courſe, and keep the Faith: Where we ſhall ceaſe to grieve, to ſuffer, and to ſin; but never ceaſe to live and to be happy: Singing perpetual *Hallelujahs* to him that ſits upon the Throne, to the holy Spirit, and to the Lamb for evermore.

A LITANY.

O GOD the Father of Heaven, the God of Angels and of Men, the Father of compaſſions, of conſolation and life;

Have mercy upon us miſerable ſinners.

O God the Son, the Eternal well-beloved Son, by whom the ſinful race of Men become the Sons of God;

Have mercy upon us, &c.

O God the Holy Ghoſt, the Spirit of comfort, of holineſs and grace, by whom we receive the Adoption, and the earneſt of our hope;

Have mercy upon us, &c.

Holy, Bleſſed and Glorious Trinity, diſtinguiſht as in Perſon, ſo in the various diſpenſations of the work of our Redemption; united as in Eſſence, ſo in the acts of kindneſs and compaſſion to Men;

Have mercy upon us, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to create in us clean hearts, and to renew a right ſpirit within us, to reſcue us from all the deceits of the World, the Devil and our own Hearts.

We beſeech thee to hear us, good Lord.

That it may pleaſe thee to grant that all who have been baptiz'd into Chriſt, may indeed put on Chriſt; ſeriouſly weigh, and induſtriouſly anſwer the obligation of their holy calling; not reſt in the form and outſide of Religion, whilſt by a wretchleſs inconſideration they enervate the power and efficacy thereof.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee ſo to guide our conſideration, that we do not thereby ſo enſnare our ſelves, entertain thoſe deluſions which flatter us with hopes of reward, without performing duty; but that by an impartial advertency to all thy Sacred dictates, we may be engag'd to a conſtant, entire obedience, and work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to open our Eyes that we may ſee the wondrous things of thy Law, to convince us that it is holy, juſt and good, ſweeter than hony and the hony-comb, and that all our objections to it ariſe only from our being carnal and ſold under ſin.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to remove all our carnal prejudices, and vicious prepoſſeſſions; and to enable us to meaſure thy precepts by the rules of right reaſon, and an illuminated conſcience, according to the analogy of thy holy faith once delivered to the Saints.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to inſpirit us by thy grace, that we may not only approve but obey thy commands, conquer all the diſcouragements of ſloth or vice, and chearfully ſet to the practice of Chriſtian duty, that ſo we may experimentally find how ſweet the Lord is.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to put thy fear in our hearts, that we may never depart from thee, but equally obey thee in all things, not indulging to any favourite ſin, but entirely reſign and captivate every thought to the obedience of Chriſt.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to take theſe ſtony hearts out of us, and to give us hearts of Fleſh; ſuch as may melt at the apprehenſion of our ſins and thy diſpleaſure.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to endue us with a right Judgment, that we deceive not our ſelves with ſhews and formalities of repentance; but bring forth indeed fruits meet for it.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to awake us from our ſupine and dangerous dependence on a future repentance, and make us in this our day diſcern and embrace the things belonging to our Peace, ſo anſwering thy preſent calls, that we may not at laſt call when thou ſhall only laugh at our calamity, and mock when our fear cometh.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to poſſeſs our Souls with a juſt reverence, and right apprehenſions of thy Eſſence and Attributes, that we may not form our belief of thee by our own fancies or wiſhes, but by thoſe revelations thou haſt given of thy ſelf in thy word.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to reſtrain our bold Curioſity in prying into thy Counſels and Decrees, and make us wiſe unto Sobriety, reſerving ſecret things unto the Lord our God, and ſtudying the revealed ones for the regulating of our lives.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to give us ſuch an awe of thy juſtice, that we may fear to provoke it, not expecting thou ſhouldſt repent of thy judgments, when we do not of our ſins, nor fancying that any milder vengeance attends our final obſtinacy than unquenchable fire.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to grant us ſuch a ſence of thy mercy, that we may never ſay there is no hope, or excuſe our incorrigibleneſs by our deſperation, but that the goodneſs of God may lead us to repentance, yet let us never ſo preſume on it, as to ſin that Grace may abound.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to enable us with all due regard to obſerve, and humility to adore, the diſpenſations of thy Providence, not pretending to fathom thy ſecret intendments, but endeavouring ſo to comply with all ſignal diſcoveries of thy purpoſes towards us, that what thou deſigneſt for our wealth, may not be to us an occaſion of falling.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee, that from every event, whether National or Perſonal, we may ſtill infer the obligation and neceſſity of turning from our ſins; that gratitude for paſt mercies may allure us to good, and fear of impending Judgments may drive us from evil.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to inſpire the univerſal Church with the Spirit of Truth, Unity, and Concord, that there may be no diviſions among us; but that we may be perfectly joyn'd together, in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee, whereinſoever any are contrary-minded, to reveal thy truth to them; and in the interim ſo to allay thoſe heats our differences have caus'd, that amidſt the diverſities of judgment, we may keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace.

We beſeech thee, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to deliver us from all the unhappy effects of our contentions, and to purge us from all the criminous cauſes of them, and ſo to heal our breaches, that *Jeruſalem* may again become a City at unity in it ſelf. *We beſeech thee*, &c.

That it may pleaſe thee to grant that we no longer dote about queſtions, and ſtrifes of words whereof cometh Envy, Railing, evil Surmiſes; but ſo buſie our ſelves in practick duties, that we may not fear when our Lord comes to be found ſo doing.

We beſeech thee, &c.

Son of God we beſeech thee to hear us.

O Lamb of God that takeſt away the ſins of the World;

Grant us thy Peace.

O Lamb of God that takeſt away the ſins of the world ;
Have mercy upon us.
O Chriſt hear us.

Lord have mercy upon us.
Chriſt have mercy upon us.
Lord have mercy upon us.

OUR *Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name,* &c.

O Lord deal not with us after our ſins.
Neither reward us after our Iniquities.

ALmighty God, who ſheweſt to them that be in Error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return to the way of righteouſneſs: Grant unto all them that be admitted to the fellowſhip of Chriſt's Religion, that they may eſchew thoſe things which be contrary to their profeſſion, and follow all ſuch things as are agreeable to the ſame, through *Jeſus* Chriſt our Lord.

O Merciful Saviour, who ſo lovedſt thy Church, as to give thy ſelf for her, look again on her with thy compaſſionate eyes, who now needs a ſecond redemption, even a reſcue from her ſelf, from the unnatural iſſue of her own bowels. Lord, thou ſeeſt the miſerable ſtate to which ſhe is reduced, by our wild contentions, that ſhe has at once loſt her purity, and her peace, and is become an *Aceldama*, a field of bloud. Lord, where is thy pity and the ſounding of thy bowels towards her, are they reſtrained? O remember thy old loving kindneſs, the love of thy eſpouſals, and as thou wert once a Lamb to expiate her guilts, ſo be thou now a Lion to vindicate her wrongs; ſtrike a dread into the hearts of all, who have contributed to her ruine, and make them know that whoſo touches her, toucheth the apple of thine Eye. O let not her ſtill ſink under the oppreſſion of our ſordid deſigns, and irregular appetites, nor be devoured by thoſe who pretend to guard her. Give her Paſtors after thine own heart; let her Prieſts be cloath'd with righteouſneſs, and waſh their hands in innocence before they compaſs thine Altar. O let not any vain ambition for themſelves, make them expoſe and proſtitute the honour of their God: No affectation of that knowledge which puffeth up, divert them from that Charity which only edifieth: Grant that the intereſt of Religion may ſtill be uppermoſt in their hearts, and never veil to Secular Ends, nor the pretence of truth cloak any exorbitant paſſion. Nay, O Lord, refine even their Zeal, and make it ſerve to kindle, not conſume their Charity: And to inſpirit them with ſuch an unwearied induſtry, that they may always abound in the work of the Lord, diligently take heed to thoſe flocks, over whom the holy Ghoſt has made them overſeers, never turning aſide to vain jangling, or ſtriving about words to no profit. And to all who are under their charge, give meekneſs to ſubmit to thoſe who by thy appointment watch their Souls; ſuppreſs all prejudices and faction, and let none be puffed up for one againſt another, but grant that by a due attendance on their callings, both as men and Chriſtians they may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlineſs and honeſty. And, Lord, let both Prieſt and People ſo follow after the things that make for peace, that we may adorn the doctrine of our God and Saviour, take off the Scandal our diviſions have given to thoſe that are without, and again evidence our relation to the Prince of Peace: And O that our ways were made thus direct; but alas, how little diſpoſition have we towards it? This change muſt be only the work of that mighty power, which is able to ſubdue all things to it ſelf: And yet, O Lord, with what face can we beg of thee to force us to that happineſs, which we ſtill reſolve to reſiſt? What can we then ſay unto thee, O thou preſerver, thou redeemer of men, who have put our ſelves beyond all the ordinary methods of thy grace? We can only lay our ſelves at thy feet; diſplay our miſery, and leave thee to conſider thine own compaſſion: O let that move thee to do for us whatever our wretched eſtate is in need of; O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, conſider and do it, if not for ours, yet for thy Name's ſake: Thou art *Jeſus* a Saviour, ſave thy people from their ſin, and let us not ſlide back by a perpetual backſliding; thou art the head of the Church, O abandon not thy body: Careſt thou not that ſhe periſh? Turn thee again, O Lord, renew her days as of old, ſanctifie and cleanſe her, that thou mayeſt again preſent her to thy ſelf a glorious Church, not having ſpot or wrinkle, and if ſhe muſt ſtill be militant, let it no longer be within her ſelf, but againſt ſpiritual wickedneſſes, the ruler of the darkneſs of this world; till at laſt thou utterly beat down Satan under her feet; and tranſlate her from this ſtate of warfare, to that of Triumph, and bliſs in the Kingdom of thy Father; which thou O bleſſed *Jeſus* haſt purchaſed with thy Bloud, and ſealed by thy Spirit. To which bleſſed Trinity be aſcrib'd all praiſe, honour, and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

O MOST gracious Lord, who out of thy boundleſs compaſſion to thy creatures, art never wanting in any means that may draw them to thy ſelf, we the unworthieſt of them deſire to give glory to thee, in a hearty acknowledgment that thou haſt in a moſt eminent and peculiar manner abounded to us of this Nation, afforded us all the methods that might either force or allure us to obedience. Lord, thou wert pleaſed to keep us many years under thy chaſtening hand, thou broughteſt us into the ſnare and laideſt trouble upon our loins, and didſt at once upbraid and puniſh our voluntary ſlaveries to our own luſts, by giving us up a prey to thoſe of others: And when thoſe judgments which ſhould have melted, ſerv'd but to harden us; when we ſeemed emulous to have our ſins out-vie thy Plagues, as they had before thy mercies, what could we then expect, but to find a judgment worthy of God? Such an irreverſible ruine, as might render us an hiſſing and aſtoniſhment to the whole Earth? But when we were thus ripened for thy greateſt ſeverity, then didſt thou O Lord, prevent us with the bleſſings of thy goodneſs, miraculouſly interpoſe for our reſcue, and by ſuch undiſcernible ways return the captivity of our *Sion*, that we were deliver'd like them that dream. This, O Lord, was ſo ſtupendious, ſo amazing a mercy, that nothing can be more admirable, but only our prodigious ingratitude: Thou haſt ſignally atteſted thy ſelf to be a God that doſt wonders, and yet we who enjoy the benefit of them, neither conſider them as wonders, nor thee as God; but Atheiſtically defie that Providence by which we ſubſiſt. Thou haſt reſtored to us our ſolemn worſhip, and we now ſay what a wearineſs is it? can ſeldom afford it our preſence, and ſeldomer our hearts. Thou haſt broken the yoke of uſurping oppreſſors, and we murmur no leſs at our lawful governours, as if all that we deſired to reap by the exchange, were the guilt of ſpeaking evil of Dignities. Thou haſt freed us from the burden of unlawful impoſed oaths; and we daily rend thy ſacred name by voluntary impertinent ones. Thou haſt delivered our eſtates from the rapine of others, and we ſacrifice them to our own riot, and are never the more open-handed to our poor brethren for all thy munificence to us. Thou haſt reſtor'd us the liberty of our Perſons, and we proclaim licence to our luſts. Theſe are the degenerous and baſe returns we have made; thus, O thus have we requited the Lord, and by it have again forc'd thee to reſume thy ſcourge and by a ſucceſſion of ſignal judgments atteſt thy diſpleaſure. And yet, O Lord, who regardeth the power of thy wrath? Who is there that repenteth him of his ways, or ſaith, what have I done? Never any Soil made ſo ill return to ſo much husbandry, and ſince we bring forth nothing but Briars and Thorns, we may ſurely conclude we are nigh unto curſing: And, O Lord, what can we plead to avert the Sentence, who are as far from penitence as innocence, or how can we pray againſt that vengeance, which we make it our buſineſs to pull down? Nay, O Lord, ſhouldſt thou as miraculouſly prolong, as thou didſt reſtore our Peace, yet what will that avail us, if it ſerve but to ſet us at greater hoſtility with thee? Bleſſed Lord, there is but one mercy that we are capable of, and that is the melting our hearts, and if that cannot be done, but by caſting us into a yet more fiery furnace; Lord, do that or any thing with us, ſo we may come out veſſels of honour meet for thy ſervice. But yet, O Lord, if thy gentler methods may have any effect, be pleas'd to continue thy long ſuffering; and though we have no pretence to mercy, yet do thou aſſert thine own work, be merciful becauſe thou haſt been ſo, and ſuffer us not to deſtroy what thou haſt ſo miraculouſly preſerv'd. Finally, O Lord, diſpenſe to us whatſoever thou ſeeſt moſt apt to reduce us; and that thy outward applications may be no longer in vain, enforce and enliven them with thy inward: and by the ſweet inſinuations of thy bleſſed Spirit, ſubdue our obſtinate perverſeneſs; and give us at laſt ſuch grace as we may not turn into wantonneſs. O thou to whom all things are poſſible, who haſt done ſuch wonderful things for us, work a yet greater miracle in us, and of a profane, ungrateful licentious Nation, make us an holy people unto thy ſelf, that all ranks and conditions of men, may as univerſally and induſtriouſly combine to propitiate, as they have to provoke thee: That ſo by bringing forth fruits of Repentance, we may eſcape thy wrath both temporal and eternal. Grant this for his ſake who died to work that deliverance for us: *Jeſus* Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

FINIS.

THE GENTLEMAN'S CALLING.

Written by the Author
OF
The Whole Duty of Man.

1 Cor. vii. 24.
Ἕκαστος ἐν ᾧ ἐκλήθη, ἀδελφοὶ, ἐν τούτῳ μενέτω παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. Heptinſtall*, for E. *Pawlet*, at the Sign of
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THE

PREFACE.

1. THE *Authority of Cuſtom hath ſo much a more general prevalency than that of Truth; that he that ſhall adventure to aſſault that with this, may be thought not to have well digeſted the prudent Caution of our Saviour, Luke* 14. 31. To ſit down and conſider whether he be able with ten thouſand to meet him that cometh againſt him with twenty thouſand; *for doubtleſs ſuch, and much greater is the odds between theſe two Litigants. And to the imputation of this unwarineſs I cannot but foreſee the preſent Deſign very liable.*

Cuſtom more prevalent than Truth.

2. *Gentility has long ſince confuted* Job's *Aphoriſm,* Man is born to labour, *and inſtead thereof, has pronounced to its Clients the Rich man's* Requiem, *Soul take thine eaſe, eat, drink and be merry. A* Gentleman *is now ſuppoſed to be only a thing of pleaſure, a Creature ſent into the World, as the* Leviathan *into the deep,* to take his paſtime therein, *(and the better to complete the Parallel, to devour his underlings too) and then 'twill be no wonder if it be adjudged a ridiculous Solœciſm to attempt to define his* Calling, *whoſe very Eſſence is thought to conſiſt in having none. Nay, perhaps it will be deemed not only abſurd but malicious, a Levelling project, of robbing him of his Birth-right, of degrading him from thoſe priviledges, which belong to his quality, and of moulding him again into that vulgar Maſs, from which Divine Providence and humane Laws have diſtinguiſhed him. But from this jealouſie I dare truſt the enſuing leaves to be their own Vindicators.*

Gentlemen are ſeldom bred up to any thing but their pleaſure.

3. *I have been no unconcerned (much leſs inſulting) Spectator of the Depreſſion the* Gentry *have fallen under in theſe latter years, but have paid them my juſt Tribute of compaſſion: Yet I confeſs I think thoſe ſcarce worthy a regret, in compariſon with thoſe voluntary deſcents, too many of them have made from true worth and vertue. 'Tis ſure a far leſs deplorable ſpectacle to ſee a* Gentleman *ſpoiled of his Fortune by his Conſcience, than his Luxury; and to behold him under the ſtroke of the Headſman, than under thoſe more infamous Executioners, his Luſt, or Intemperance. Yet I fear if the Martyrologie even of theſe ſuffering Times were ſcanned,* Venus *and* Bacchus *would be found to have had many more Martyrs, than* God *and* Loyalty.

The vices of Gentlemen degrade them more than their calamities,

4. *But I confeſs it an impertinence thus to balance the two miſchiefs of doing and ſuffering ill, ſince 'tis certain the latter is to be reſolved into the former, and has no exiſtence of it ſelf, but what it derives from that. Puniſhments are but the reſults of ſin: And therefore whatever* Malignity *is in the Effect, becomes entirely chargeable upon the Cauſe, and we are to look upon our Vice not only as our greateſt, but our only unhappineſs. This Conſideration ſhews us the ſource of all our* Sufferings, *and is it ſelf no leſs obvious, than thoſe; though one would think it as concealed as the head of* Nilus, *that ſhould only obſerve how many other Originals of our Calamities are aſſigned, whilſt this is ſcarce dreamt of. This* Jonah *is ſuffered to ſleep ſecurely in the Ship, while here more innocent Fraught*

and though ſeldom taken notice of, yet are one main cauſe of their Sufferings;

is caſt over board, *Jonah* 1. 5. *Every the leaſt ſparkle from without is charged as an* Incendiary, *when alas, like* Ætna, *our own bowels ſend out that fire, which has ſo near reduced us to aſhes. But as in Diſeaſes we account the Diſcovery of the Cauſe the firſt and moſt neceſſary ſtep to the Cure; ſo certainly is it here, the conviction of our guilt is a moſt indiſpenſable Preparative towards the eaſe of our Preſſures, and we muſt be* heavy laden *in the Chriſtian ſence,* Matth. 11. 28. *before we ſhall ceaſe to be ſo in the Civil.*

and therefore ought to be deſtroyed and cut off as the Troublers of our *Iſrael.*

5. *But I fear men proceed in this affair rather like* Mountebanks *than good Phyſicians, uſe ſome Palliating Medicines to allay the effects, or perhaps Anodynes to ſtupefie the Patient, and wholly neglect the Root of the Malady. Nor do I appropriate this Error to the* Gentry, *'tis too viſible that all ſorts and qualities have too juſt a claim to it, to let any one go away with the incloſure. But becauſe the preſent deſign makes them my peculiar Province, I ſhall, waving all others, addreſs my ſelf at this time to them only, with this moſt paſſionate Requeſt, that they would not uſe that cruelty to themſelves, for which* Amalek *ſtands branded towards* Iſrael, Deut. 25. 18. *by their preſerving Impieties ſmite and deſtroy thoſe feeble and faint Remains of their former Felicities; but that they would now at laſt ſeriouſly advert to this their ſo great and important concernment, and pitch upon the true* Achan, *that has thus long* troubled their Iſrael. *And that being done, that ſtory directs the next ſtep of the Proceſs, even the bringing him to execution, cutting that off which will elſe infallibly bring down a Fatal Exciſion upon themſelves. Nor is this to be deferred, for alas, the Diſeaſe is come to too great a height, too dangerous a* Criſis, *to admit any delay of the Remedy.*

The greatneſs of our judgments and nearneſs to deſtruction, ought to be an argument to Repent of our Sins,

6. *When* Egypt *had ſmarted under a ſucceſſion of miraculous plagues for detaining the* Iſraelites, *the Servants of* Pharaoh *importune him to releaſe them, and conclude their advice with this Pathetick enforcement,* Knoweſt not thou yet that *Egypt* is deſtroyed? *And God knows I may but too properly give the ſame edge to mine; For alas,* Gentlemen, *are not your Eſtates waſted, your Privileges violated, your Splendors eclipſed, your Perſons reſtrained, your Families broken and ſhattered, your Dignities trampled upon by the meaneſt of the Vulgar, and finally your ſelves quite tranſpoſed in your ſtation, now made the* Tail who were once the Head, Deut. 28. 44. *And is it not yet time to diſmiſs thoſe Sins which are the Authors of all this? If you are ſtill of* Pharaoh's *mind, and reſolve to retain them, you are certainly no leſs obſtinate than he, but much more irrational. He had ſomewhat of viſible advantage to tempt him to detain the* Iſraelites, *they were his Slaves, wrought hard at his work, built him Cities. But how far is that from the Caſe here! They are not your Slaves but your Taskmaſters, which you are ſo unwilling to part with, thoſe that ſet you to the vileſt and moſt ſervile Drudgeries, and are ſo far from bringing you in profit, that I may boldly make the Apoſtle's challenge,* Rom. 6. 21. What fruit have you had of thoſe things? *And doubt not the only account you can bring in of your Harveſt, muſt be the Inventory of your Miſeries. We are witneſſes of many Houſes, many Cities they have demoliſh'd and laid waſte, but we have no ſtructure of theirs to ſhew, but a* Babel *of Confuſion.*

which have endanger'd the Ruine of the Church, and places of God's Worſhip;

7. *But alas, theſe your ſecular Ruines are but their modeſt and petty outrages. Take another view of them, and it will like* Ezekiel's *Viſion,* Ezek. 6. 8. *preſent you with more and* greater abominations than theſe, *even the* abomination of deſolation in the holy place. *Your ſins have not only deſolated your own houſes, but God's.* That Beauty of his Ornament *which he ſet* in Majeſty, Ezek. 7. 20. *hath by theſe your deteſtable things been expoſed to ſpoil and pollution. We are not yet grown ſo old in our miſeries as to have out-worn the aggravation of remembring our happier eſtate. And how ſad, how wounding a contemplation is it to compare the paſt and preſent condition of* This Church? *When the*

Temple *was rebuilding, the joy of that reſtoration could not ſuppreſs the grief of thoſe who remembred the ſo much more Glorious Fabrick of the firſt, but they laid the foundation in their tears, the Text ſays, They* wept with a loud voice, Nehem. 3. 12. *But what tears, what ejaculations can be bitter or loud enough for us, who are to lament not partial and imperfect repairs, but total ruines and vaſtations, that ſee the materials of our* Sion *now reduced to duſt and rubbiſh, who once ſaw them happily compacted, built together as a* City at unity in it ſelf.

and ought therefore to draw forth our Zeal and Indignation againſt them.

8. *And while we thus* remember Sion, *and are our ſelves* by the waters of Babylon, *'tis ſure but proper we* ſit down and weep, *bid as thoſe Captives*, Pſal. 137. *a ſolemn Adieu to all entertainments of joy and pleaſure. And would God we all, particularly you to whom I now ſpeak, did as exactly parallel them in this ſad and pious reſentment, as we do in the motives of it, that ſo your quarrel to ſin might be accended to its full height, as that which robs you not only of your ſpiritual, but (that which many of you have more guſt of) your carnal joys alſo. 'Tis your ſins, I would I could ſay yours alone, which have been the perſecuting* Sauls, *that have thus made* havock of the Church. *The* Securities, Profaneneſs, *and* Licentiouſneſs *of your proſperous days made the firſt breaches in her walls: And now the* Impenitence *and incorrigibleneſs of your calamities, like the* Edomites, cry down with her, down with her even to the ground. *'Twas amongſt the Jews a* Capital Guilt *to curſe a* Parent, *and ſhall it now paſs for an eaſie, or no crime, not only to curſe but deſtroy our common Mother, to abett and maintain thoſe troops which thus defie, yea invade her? O why ſhould you not at laſt recall your exiled Piety, and aſſume a holy and becoming indignation againſt theſe her cruel, her implacable Enemies?*

Every man muſt acknowledge that his own ſins have had hand in the publick calamity;

9. *But this you cannot be ſuppoſed to do, whilſt you arraign only* other *men's ſins, and leave your* own *out of the Indictment, I doubt not, many of you do with diſpleaſure, perhaps more than enough, charge her ruine upon the immediate Inſtruments, accuſe the bold Intruſion of ignorant Teachers, of having depraved her* Doctrine; *Ambition and Envy of impatient Inferiors, of ſubverting her* Diſcipline; *the Pride and Faction of buſie Spirits, of diſturbing her* Peace; *the greedy Avarice of Sacrilegious perſons, of devouring her* Patrimony. *And theſe I ſhall not deny to have been the* Weapons *that thus have mortally wounded her. But let it be remembred, that theſe were weilded and whetted by the more general impieties, from whence they borrowed their deſtructive power. And therefore* to transfer *the guilt here, is but the artifice of ſlaying* Uriah with the Sword of the Children of Ammon, *which you know acquitted not* David *from being a Murderer. No, God knows, here lies a Carkaſs of a poor bleeding* Church, *but which of you our Elders are qualified for the purgation the Law aſſigns in that caſe,* Deut. 21. 8. *which of you can ſay*, our hands have not ſhed this blood, neither have our eyes ſeen it?

And the leſs Innocent we are, the more Humble and Penitent we ought to be;

10. *Yet the leſs capable you are of thus* waſhing your hands in innocence, *the greater need you have to* waſh *them in* Penitence, *and therefore ſince as you are* Sons to this Mother, *the Office of* Avenger *of blood devolves on you;* O bring forth fruits of Repentance, *by diſcharging that part faithfully; drag out theſe* Criminals *which have taken* Sanctuary *in your breaſts, and there dwell ſecurely, as in a* City of Refuge, *and hew them in pieces, as* Samuel did Agag before the Lord. *And as your incentives to this are infinitely greater and more preſſing, than in other* murders, *ſo will the effects alſo vaſtly tranſcend thoſe of common Juſtice. That only revenges; but this may repair the miſchief, recall the vital ſpirits, and reunite the ſcattered limbs of this mangled body. Such an Omnipotency is there in ſincere Repentance, that it is able even to effect a Reſurrection. O that you would be ambitious of working this Miracle, and by this pious Prodigy beget your* Mother, *that you would keep*

ſo long over her aſhes, till that moiſture had rendered them prolifical, *and you ſee her ſpring out of her* Urn.

which is the only way to prevent both our own Ruine, and that of the Churches too.

11. *This, this is your only way of reverſing that extirpating* Degree, *which theſe* Hamans (*your ſins*) *have procured. And if you neglect this,* Mordecai*'s menace to* Heſter *will be too applicable to you: If God in his unfathomable mercy ſhould* cauſe deliverance *and enlargement* to ariſe from ſome other place *to this poor deſolate Church, yet your ſelves can expect nothing but Deſtruction. If you have no ſenſe of the deſolations of* Sion, no pity to ſee her in the Duſt, *but ſtill chuſe to cheriſh thoſe impieties which have brought her thither; yet even they will at the laſt, avenge her quarrel, bring you thoſe miſeries, the ſenſe whereof it will be impoſſible for you to avoid, or extinguiſh.*

Sin is the cauſe both of Temporal and Eternal miſery;

12. *For alas to repreſent your ſins to you as the Originals meerly of Temporal, whether Private or Publick Ruins, is to give you too fair and flattering a pourtraicture of them: Theſe are but the light preluſory skirmiſhes to a more diſmal ſlaughter, the Prologue to the fatal Tragedy. Take their full character from the Apoſtle,* Rom. 6. 21. The end of thoſe things is death, *even death eternal. It is our uſual comfort againſt the perſecutions of men, that they can purſue us no farther than to the grave: There, as* Job *ſpeaks,* the weary be at reſt. *But this Tyrant in our own breaſts has no ſuch limits to its malice, but then eſpecially begins, when all other cruelties ceaſe, tortures infinitely by the gnawings of that* worm which never dies, *and the ſcorchings of that* fire which never *ſhall be* quenched.

which to cheriſh and indulge, is the greateſt folly and madneſs in the World.

13. *And now who can ſufficiently wonder at the infatuation, that You ſhould demur upon the diſmiſſing of ſo treacherous a Gueſt, that you ſhould cheriſh this Viper in your boſoms, which you already feel eating your Bowels, devouring all your temporal felicities, and yet takes thoſe but in the way to your Heart, your more precious and eternal part? 'Tis the common Maxim even of thoſe that receive advantage by the perfidiouſneſs of others, to love the Treaſon, but hate the Traitor: But here is that Rule quite inverted; You hate the Treaſon, are impatient of the afflicting conſequences of your ſin, yet love the Traitor, hug that in your cloſeſt Embraces. The Apoſtle indeed forewarns us of the* Deceitfulneſs of ſin, *Heb.* 3. 13. *but ſure this is a pitch beyond that; this is not deceit, but inchantment, ſome powerful* Philtrum *it muſt needs be, that can make men in love not only with deformity but diſeaſe.*

Vertue is naturally more amiable and delightful than Vice.

14. *But all the* Magicians of Egypt are not able to ſtand before Moſes, *this Magick is not ſo irreſiſtible, but that Reaſon and Religion will yield You countercharms able to diſinchant You, if You will but ſuffer them to come in to your aid. Do but once ſtep out of the Devil's Circle, the actual virtiginous purſuit of your ſinful appetites, and give your Faculties ſome intermiſſion, ſo much breath from that hot chaſe as may qualifie them for a calm conſiderate view of other things, and then 'tis certain you will diſcern, that Vertue has a much more raviſhing appearance, infinitely more delectable and enamouring, than all the Devil's* Opticks *could put upon your higheſt and moſt guſtful ſenſualities. Do you only beſtow ſome attentive looks upon her; let her once in at your eyes, and then leave her to make her own way to your heart. And this is ſure a very moderate requeſt; that you will but vouchſafe to look upon what is thus amiable. And with what pretence can you deny it? You who to gaze on thoſe tranſitory Beauties which are only your ſnares, ſtick at no difficulty, will be content to come (thoſe of you that have no other motives) even to Church upon that errand: O do not here put off your curioſity, where alone it may avail you, but rather take this opportunity of hallowing that (hitherto profane) part of your temper.*

The Devil is apt to beget prejudice in men's minds againſt Religion.

15. *It has been none of the Devil's meaneſt or unluckieſt Arts to infuſe prejudices into men's minds againſt* Chriſtian Practice, *by repreſenting it in the moſt averting*

averting Forms. *He* changes ſhapes *with it, and as he transforms himſelf into an* Angel of light, *ſo he does this into one of* Darkneſs, *makes it appear a State of the moſt* diſmal ſadneſs *and* horror, *a* region of Antipodes *to all Joy and Chearfulneſs. And how much more ready men are to take the* Devil *at his* word *than Chriſt at his, who profeſſes his* Yoke eaſie *and his* Burden light, *appears too viſible in the general averſeneſs thoſe have to* Piety, *who never ſo much* as tried it, *but take up implicit confuſed* prejudices *againſt it, and retain thoſe as faſt, as if they were the products of many years coſtly* experiences. *And 'tis to be feared, theſe have taken the deepeſt root in the richeſt Soil, they ſeeming no where more to flouriſh, than among you of the higheſt Quality. Yet ſure, of all others, you are moſt obliged to eradicate them, they implying ſuch a groſs injuſtice, as any ingenuous mind muſt be aſhamed of.*

None are fit to judge of Religion, till they have made trial thereof.

16. *You will your ſelves readily pronounce that* Judge *not only corrupt, but impudent, that condemns a perſon whoſe cauſe he never heard: Yet if you will but reflect, you will find your own verdict rebound upon your ſelves, with a* Tu es homo; *for 'tis evidently your caſe here. It is time for you therefore to be ſo juſt if not to Vertue, yet to your own Reputations, as to retract that condemnatory ſentence you have paſt upon her, and put on ſo much at leaſt of the* form *of Juſtice, as to give her a fair Trial. But this you cannot do by hearing the tongues of men and Angels plead for her, none but her ſelf can manage her cauſe, you muſt admit her into your ſociety and converſe, take her into ſuch a familiarity, as may bring her within diſtance of your Obſervation, before you pronounce of her. In ſhort, if you will indeed render your ſelves competent Judges, whether a Vertuous* life *be a pleaſant or a diſmal thing, enter upon it, and let your own experiences be your informers.*

17. *I cannot ſuſpect the* Age *ſo degenerous, as not to believe there are divers particular perſons among you, who have made the experiment, and to their Teſtimony I dare appeal, and doubt not they will from Judges turn Advocates, and recommend it to you, and ſure you will have no cauſe in this inſtance to wave your wonted Privilege of being tried by your* Peers, *to except againſt their judgment in the* caſe, *who being placed in equal circumſtances with you, muſt be ſuppoſed to underſtand your utmoſt Temptations to Vice, from whence alone all the ſeeming difficulties and uneaſineſſes of Vertue do ariſe.*

Vertue is in its own nature active, and an enemy to Idleneſs,

18. *It were the work of many Volumes to deſcribe the ſeveral diſtinct Advantages towards a pleaſant Being, which are wrapt up in this one comprehenſive Felicity. I ſhall inſtance only in that, to which the enſuing* Tract *particularly relates, and that is, that it furniſhes you with a ſucceſſion of very agreeable and chearful Imployments. Vertue is of a buſie and active* Nature, *and as in its ſeveral Operations it has an oppoſition to all the ſeveral ſorts of Vice, ſo in its very Conſtitution and Principle it bears an avowed Antipathy to that one fertile Seminary of moſt other Sins,* Idleneſs; *and ſure the reſcuing you from that is no* contemptible *Benefit. For though you ſeem to challenge it as a conſiderable part of your* Inheritance, *that you may live and do Nothing, and are very tenacious of that Claim; yet, 'tis moſt evident, that what you contend for, as your Privilege, your ſelves eſteem your burden, yea ſo much ſo, that to be rid of it you caſt away Eſtate, Health, Soul and all for company, imploy your ſelves the moſt ruinouſly, rather than endure to be Idle; nay quite confute your own Pretenſions to eaſe, by thoſe laborious and toilſome Vices, which you are fain to call Pleaſures, to render them tolerable, but have certainly no pretence to that* Title *on any other ſcore, but that they keep you doing.*

and affords many pleaſing innocent divertiſements.

19. *And now what more grateful office can poſſibly be done for men in this Condition, than to ſhew them how they may free themſelves of this load without contracting a worſe; I mean the guilt of thoſe things which like* Rehoboam *converts*

Whips into Scorpions, *yet are now fain to be reſorted to, as the only inſtruments of their relief. And this a Chriſtian* Life *will be ſure to do for you; it will conſtantly provide you with innocent divertiſements, nay much more, it will give you buſineſs, ſo excellent, and worthy the dignity of your Nature, ſo noble and anſwerable to the Splendor of your Qualities, ſo every way agreeable to the aims of Rational Men, that you will have cauſe to acknowledge with Our Church, that God's* Service is perfect freedom.

The particular Duties which are incumbent on Gentlemen are ſuch as ſhew that they have a Calling.

20. *I ſhall not undertake to give you a particular view of all the Severals of theſe Employments; Thoſe* Precepts *of the Goſpel which aſſign your Tasks, do ſufficiently inform you of the Nature and Excellency of them; My whole Scheme is compriſed in that One, which directs an Attendance on that Calling wherein God hath placed men, and therefore I am to treat only of thoſe particular* Duties *which are incumbent on you as* Gentlemen, *and therein ſhew you that conſidered* as *ſuch, you have a* Calling, *and ſo free you of that reproach and miſery of being* unprofitable burdens *of the Earth, and then evince to you alſo that* that *Calling is ſo far from implying any thing of real toil or uneaſineſs, that it is only an Art of refining and ſublimating your Pleaſures, rendering them more guſtful and exquiſite, and ſo will (if attended to) make good to you in earneſt your miſtaken pretence to a* Life *of ſenſuality and delight.*

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THE
Gentleman's Calling.

SECT. I.

Of Buſineſs and Callings in general.

1. HE that by *ſloth* and improvidence diſſipates and conſumes that *Stock* which is properly his own, falls juſtly under the blunt Cenſure of Folly, and uſually under the ſharper and more ſmarting Penance of Poverty and Want: But he that is but a deputed Manager, if he neglect his *Depoſitum*, is liable to a heavier weight both of Obloquy and Diſcipline. The weakneſs of the one may poſſibly meet with ſomewhat of pity; but the falſeneſs and treachery of the other is the object of an univerſal deteſtation, and is oftentimes very ſeverely ſentenced by thoſe, who if they would impartially reflect, would find themſelves deeply involved in the ſame guilt.

Folly to waſte our own Stock; but Treachery to make away that which is entruſted us by another.

2. God has placed *Man* in the World, not as a *Proprietary*, but a *Steward*; he hath put many excellent things into his poſſeſſion, but theſe in truſt to be not only kept, but negotiated with, and by traffick improved to the uſe of the true Owner: Yet herein dealing as a moſt bountiful Maſter, by not only promiſing tranſcendent Rewards in the future to his fidelity, but even annexing at the preſent (*as to the Heifer that treadeth out the Corn*) a moſt liberal ſubſiſtence, interweaving his intereſt ſo with his Duty, that the diſcharge of it is his only means of being happy even in this world.

Man is but a Steward of all that he poſſeſſeth in the world.

3. This certainly is the ſtate of mankind in general; every (*I mean Rational*) perſon having ſomething of this kind intruſted to him. No man that hath underſtanding, be that of a higher or lower ſize, but hath variety of abilities of one ſort or other, and withal that actuating power, which ſhould ſet them on work. And then ſurely he that hath not been excluded from the receits, muſt not pretend an exemption from the diſburſements, the tasks, but is under a ſtrict obligation of improving what he hath thus received, of bringing in fruit to the Granary, as well in order to his own account and joy in the auditing of the harveſt, as alſo to the glory of God from whom alone he derives (and muſt impute) both the ſeed, and irrigation, and the very increaſe. And he that on theſe grounds and according to theſe meaſures decently adminiſters his Province, ſedulouſly attends this duty in this matter, will find himſelf placed in ſuch an active ſtate of buſineſs, that he ſhall have little cauſe to ſuſpect himſelf neglected or forgotten by God and Nature, or placed in the world without a *Calling*.

Every man is intruſted with a Talent of one kind or other.

4. From what is thus indiſpenſably required of *all* men, no one rank or individual of that *ſpecies* can plead an immunity. And therefore till thoſe whom *Birth*, *Education* and *Wealth*, and the common dialect of the world

hath made known by the ſtile of *Gentlemen*, ſhall think fit to expunge the latter part of that title, and diſclaim the nature of *men*, as they are willing to do the duty, they muſt certainly retract this error, and acknowledge they have their ſhares in this common obligation.

The Bleſſed Angels in Heaven have their ſeveral offices and imployments as miniſtring Spirits.

5. Nay indeed if they could ſo far imitate the *Prince of the Morning*, as to ſucceed to that rank which he was willing to leave, I mean to aſcend above humanity and aſſume the nature of Angels, yet even thither would this purſue and overtake them. Among all the Orders of that divine Hierarchy they would not find one Patron or Preſident of Idleneſs. For as the ſpirituality of their eſſence renders them more agile and active, ſo that activity is perpetually exerciſed in employing the divine abilities they have received, to the glory of God the Donor: And that not only in bearing a part in that Celeſtial Quire which inceſſantly ſings his praiſes, but in the more laborious and ſervile offices of being miniſtring ſpirits, yea even to thoſe to whom both in reſpect of nature and innocence they are infinitely ſuperiour. And this they do with perfect alacrity and chearfulneſs, thinking it their greateſt honour and dignity to be thus buſied. Their *regitive Power over the world*, ſaith *Gerſon*, *is not ſo ſuitable an ingredient for a* Magnificate *of their compoſing, as that greater dignity of receiving and performing God's commands*: An evidence how much the meaſures of honour differ between the Courtiers of Heaven and Earth, the Inhabitants of that refined, and this groſs Region. Thus then the proſpect lies before the *Gentleman*: If he chuſe either to look level on the ſame nature with himſelf, or direct his eyes upward on that of the glorious Spirits that encompaſs God's Throne, he will not in all the Records of Earth or Heaven find ever a *Patent* for ſloth, any Clauſe of Exemption in this univerſal Law.

The brute Beaſts imploy their ſeveral powers and faculties to the end for which they were created.

6. Nay, if this *man in honour* would bid farewel to his Birth-right, and become *like the beaſts that periſh*, *Pſal.* 49. 20. if he could be content, in purſuit of this one fanſied privilege of a *Gentleman*, to renounce all the real ones of a man, and make *Nebuchadnezzar*'s puniſhment his option: Yet neither the Field nor the Foreſt could give him Sanctuary, afford him any number of aſſociates to aid, or but countenance him in this mutiny againſt this divine Decree, they would rather be his tutors and monitors to obey it. For what rank even of the moſt *ſavage* Animals is there which we can indict of the not employing thoſe faculties they have received? Are they not generally in a perpetual and regular motion to thoſe ends for which they were created, in continual exerciſe of thoſe powers with which they are endued? Yea ſome of them with ſuch improvement to all their neceſſary purpoſes, that it hath raiſed a doubt whether they act by inſtinct or reaſon, by fancy or judgement. *Pythagoras* is diſcernably on their ſide: And *Ariſtotle* that was leſs kind to them, ſeems by one ſaying to have yielded the cauſe, when of *thoſe creatures which*, he ſaith, *want reaſon*, he confeſſeth *that fancy ſupplies its place.* I need not take part in this diſpute; whatſoever their faculties or Talents are, none can doubt of their uſe of them, or whether this their uninterrupted obedience to the Law of their Creation reflects the proportionable glory on their Creator.

Yea the very ſenſeleſs and inanimate Creatures perform all the Offices of their Nature in an admirable and orderly manner.

7. To deſcend one degree lower yet; The very *inanimate* Creatures afford their conſort to this divine harmony; every one of them perform thoſe offices, fail not in the exerciſe of all thoſe (not unactive) qualities God hath put into them. The *Sun* hath received a power of cheriſhing and enlivening terreſtrial bodies, and it folds not up its rays, but communicates

and diſpenſeth them freely. The *Earth* has received a power of fructifying, giving ſap and verdure to that which grows upon it, and it withholds not that vital moiſture, but like a tender nurſe ſends it forth liberally to all that expect nouriſhment from her breaſts; and ſo proportionably to all other parts of this great body. And that all this ſerves to illuſtrate the glory of that omnipotent wiſdom which hath placed them in this ſo excellent a ſubordination, is moſt viſible without the help of a perſpective. When the Queen of *Sheba* ſaw the magnificence and regularity of *Solomon's* Court, ſhe brake out into an admiration of his wiſdom: And ſurely a far greater occaſion is miniſtred to all thoſe who contemplate the admirable order of the Univerſe, with all tranſportation of Soul to magnifie and adore the divine Diſpoſer of it, as we ſee frequently exemplified to us in the ſublime Raptures of the holy *Pſalmiſt*, who never better approves his right to be called *the Sweet Singer of* Iſrael, than on this raviſhing Theme.

No great honour for man to debaſe himſelf beneath the very loweſt of the Creation.

8. And now can it be ſanſied a privilege and dignity, to be the one *jarring ſtring* in this great Inſtrument? To diſcompoſe this divine melody, and become the only unprofitable uſeleſs part of the Creation? Shall thoſe whom God hath made *little lower than the Angels*, ſubdue and debaſe their natures beneath the very loweſt rank of Creatures? And ſhall this (not humble but) ſordid exinanition be look'd upon with reverence, courted as a preferment? This certainly is ſuch an abſurdity, as wants nothing to its confutation, but merely to be conſider'd: And therefore if *Gentlemen* would but ſoberly reflect, there is little doubt but they would reſign at once their claim, and their value of this ſo defaming a piece of honour, ſo abaſing an exaltation.

The Devils themſelves are never Idle; but always buſie and active toward man's deſtruction.

9. We can let down our thoughts but one ſtep lower, and that is into the bottomleſs pit; and from thence ſure none will deſire to fetch a precedent; yet if he did, even that black Region could not afford it. For though it muſt be confeſſed, thoſe *accurſed ſpirits* accord not with the former inſtances, in reſpect of the end of their actions, yet they do in the activity it ſelf: Theirs is a buſie ſtate, though to an ill purpoſe: *Satan goes to and fro in the earth*, Job 2. 2. and he *walks about ſeeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 12. Yea he employs all his faculties too, makes diligent uſe of all that acuteneſs and dexterity, which either his nature or experience have furniſhed him with, towards that end he purſues. So that it were a wronging, a calumniating even of the very *Devil*, to charge him with idleneſs: Which though it be a ſin which yields him ſuch liberal crops, that he may well ſeek both to plant and cheriſh it in humane nature, yet he cannot offer ſuch violence to his own, as to become an Example of it.

Idleneſs cannot find a Patron throughout the whole Univerſe.

10. We may hence make a meaſure, how ſcandalous, reproachful a thing this is, which neither *Heaven*, *Earth*, nor *Hell* it ſelf will own, but is like an illegitimate birth, diſclaim'd by all. How unreaſonable, nay how infamous will it then be, for thoſe to take up this expoſed brat, to foſter this vice in their boſoms, who have of all others the greateſt and moſt particular obligation to deteſt it, as having received the moſt of thoſe Talents which engaged them to action? And that ſuch is the *Gentleman's condition*, a ſlight inſpection will ſerve to demonſtrate.

SECT. II.

Of Varieties of Callings.

The more Talents we have receiv'd, the greater improvement is expected from us.

1. NOW ſince the univerſal obligation, which is incumbent upon all, and renders it ſtrict duty to have a *Calling*, reſts upon this undeniable ground, *That all men have received from God ſome abilities to actuate,* ſome *Talents* to improve; it follows by all Laws of inference, that thoſe who have received the moſt of theſe, can of all others the leaſt reaſonably pretend to an Exemption, but muſt on the contrary be acknowledged under the conſtraint of the ſtronger and more numerous ties, the general duty which herein lies upon all, extending and ſpreading it ſelf into *ſeveral Branches*, according to the quality and proportion of men's receits.

God hath wiſely aſſigned men to variety of Callings and Imployments.

2. Hence it comes to paſs, that mens *Callings* and Employments become ſo various, not only by the free choices of the ſeveral men, but even by the direction and aſſignation of God and Nature, becauſe one man is furniſhed with an ability, which qualifies him for one ſort of calling, another is by his diſtinct propriety markt out for another. And hence alſo it is, that thoſe callings, which are diſtinct in ſeveral perſons, may come to be united in one man, becauſe the ſeveral abilities, which conſtitute thoſe *Callings*, concurring in him, the duties muſt by unavoidable conſequence do ſo alſo. This is in ſome degree obſervable in moſt men, who beſides the *general* powers common to mankind, do receive *ſome peculiar* in order to ſome ſpecial end, and ſo are obliged not only to thoſe Exerciſes which belong indifferently to their whole *ſpecies*, but to thoſe alſo for which they are individually qualified. Thus thoſe whom God hath called to *Chriſtianity*, are by that impowred for thoſe performances which that holy profeſſion exacts, and ſo have the calling of *Chriſtians* ſuperadded to the other, which either natural or civil obligation had laid upon them; ſo that the ſame man may have various callings, in relation to his differing capacities, unleſs as we diſtinguiſh mens Souls into the vegetative, the animal, and the rational, which in ſtricter ſpeaking may be ſaid to be only divers operations of the ſame Soul, ſo in truth what we term ſeveral callings, be but the ſame comprehenſive one, ſtretching it ſelf into the ſeveral faculties of the perſon.

Gentlemen are ſo far from having no Calling, that they have obligations to many.

3. I need not attempt to evince the impropriety of the phraſe, 'twill ſerve my end as well that they paſs for ſeveral, and the application I ſhall make of it, is to ſhew thoſe who are unwilling to hear of any *Calling* at all, that they have obligations indiſpenſable to more than one. They have whatever can belong to them as men, they have alſo what belongs to them as *Chriſtians*; and they have alſo a peculiar addition appertaining to them as *Gentlemen*, that is by interpretation, thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed from the vulgar, not only by empty names and aery titles, but by real donatives, diſtributed to them by God, as ſo many diſtinct advantages, fertile and prolifical abilities, towards the bringing him in his expected harveſt of honour and glory.

The duties that concern us as Men and Chriſtians are generally forgotten and worn out of practice.

4. It is too much to be doubted, many of them may need admonition concerning the *two* former of theſe callings; the duties even of Men, much more of Chriſtians being ſo far worn out of practice, that they ſeem to be out of memory too; or if they be at all reflected on, 'tis with the ſame ſcorn that the antiquated habits of our forefathers are, as things fit only to dreſs a man up an object of laughter and deriſion. But this

would be too vaſt a Theme, and beſides is ſuperſeded by the many pious labours of others. My purpoſe therefore is not to treat at all of them, otherwiſe than they ſhall happen to be linked and interwoven, as in many particulars they are, with the *third*, that of the *Gentleman*.

There are ſeveral peculiar Imployments that belong to Gentlemen as ſuch.

5. And here they need not fear that I mean to put the Spade or Hammer into their hands to require them to become either Husbandmen or Mechanicks: My whole deſign is founded in their diſtinction from theſe, namely, in thoſe things, wherein either in kind or degree they excel them. That many ſuch things there are, they will need no Monitor at another time, when the Queſtion is only of the Reverence and Reſpect due from ſuch their inferiours: In ſuch caſes every one can make large Scrolls and Catalogues (*written*, like *Ezekiel*'s Roll, *within and without*) of his *Advantages* and *Prerogatives*, and ſtretch them to the exacting the very laſt mite of Tribute they can poſſibly pretend to. But let them remember, that God is as jealous of his Honour, as they can be of their own: And therefore as they make thoſe Pre-eminences inſtruments of attracting Glory from thoſe below them, ſo they muſt alſo of reverberating and returning it home to that divine Power above them, who beſtowed them to that end, and will not finally be deluded; but if they will diſappoint his primary intention, that of having his *Grace* glorified in their faithful managery of thoſe Talents, they ſhall not be able to defeat his ſecondary, that of having his *Juſtice* magnified in the fatal doom of ſuch *ſlothful ſervants*; if they will envy him the more agreeable ſatisfaction of beſtowing Rewards, they cannot defraud him of that (though inferiour) of executing vengeance.

SECT. III.

The Particulars of the Gentleman's Advantages above others.

Advantages peculiar to Gentlemen are inſtanc'd in:

1. BUT to dwell no longer on Generals, I ſhall deſcend to particularize thoſe *Advantages*, by which they are ſevered and diſcriminated from the vulgar, and which conſequently by being peculiar to them, devolve on them an obligation of a *diſtinct Duty*. And here I ſhall be careful to prevent diſpute, and therefore take in none but what are ſo obvious, as to be univerſally acknowledged; and then having my premiſſes granted, I ſhall hope they will not betray themſelves ſuch ill Logicians, as to reſiſt or diſclaim the Concluſion.

1. The Advantage of a liberal and ingenuous Education.

2. I begin with that *Advantage* which they are earlieſt poſſeſt of, that of an ingenuous and *refined Education*; of which I hope, none that hath had it, will ſo far confute the efficacy, as to deſpiſe and undervalue it. What the Apoſtle urges in a higher argument, *Rom.* 9. may be appliable here. Mens minds are naturally of the ſame *Clay*: *Education* is the *Potter*'s hand and wheel, that forms them into *Veſſels of honour* or *diſhonour*. And tho' experience ſhews us, it is too poſſible for Men to deface thoſe nobler Impreſſions which they have thus received, yet that makes it not ceaſe to be in it ſelf a moſt eſtimable Bleſſing, any more than that excellency of God's Image wherein Man was created, could be defaced by his Fall. It is certain, there is no humane means more effectual towards the refining and ſharpning Mens Intellects, giving them an edge and quickneſs; and that the more, becauſe it takes them in that Age wherein their faculties are, as their joynts, pliant and tractable, and ſo capable of being by exerciſe improv'd

prov'd into great degrees both of ſtrength and activity. *This* Advantage the meaner ſort generally want, the expenceſulneſs of ſuch a breeding ſets it beyond their reach: The indigence of whoſe condition, doth on the contrary determine their purſuits to that only, which may bring them in a ſubſiſtence, faſtens them to the Shop or Plough, and ſo leaves their minds uncultivated and unapt for thoſe more excellent productions which the happier *Inſtitution of Gentlemen* enables them for; as we ſee it obſerved by the Wiſe-man, *Ecclus.* 38. 25. to the end of that Chapter.

2. The Advantage of Wealth and Riches.

3. A ſecond Advantage is that of *Wealth*, which to Gentlemen ſeems to be, as it were rained down from the Clouds, both in reſpect of the plenty and the eaſineſs of its acquiſition. Fair Patrimonies, large Inheritances deſcend on them without one drop of their ſweat, one minute's toil or ſolicitude, as if they were the undoubted Heirs of the *Iſraelites* Bleſſing, Succeſſors in their *Canaan*, who were to *poſſeſs Houſes full of all good things which they filled not, and Wells digged which they digged not, Vineyards and Olive-trees which they planted not*, as it is *Deut.* 6. 11. The Poet hath placed it in the front of his Inventory, the prime Ingredient in the completeſt felicity of this life, *Res non parta labore ſed relicta*: Whereas on the other ſide, the lower rank of Men fetch their mere neceſſaries out of the Earth, which being as it were, hardned and petrified by *Adam*'s ſin, muſt be mollified and ſuppled with their ſweat, before it will become penetrable, will not yield them food, but gives them alſo a portion of ſorrow with it. They muſt firſt be torn with thoſe Thorns and Briars which cover her ſurface, before they can fetch nouriſhment out of her Bowels; they muſt buy their Bread with their ſweat, as if they had engroſſed the penalty of their firſt Fathers ſin, whilſt *Gentlemen* ſweat only at the engagement of their *ſports*, or by the direction of the *Phyſician*, to digeſt their fulneſs of Bread. Which every one muſt confeſs a ſufficient inequality.

3. The Advantage of Time and Leiſure.

4. A third is that of *Time*. This depends by way of conſequence on the former. For God having made ſuch liberal proviſions for them, thus prevented them with the Bleſſings of his Goodneſs, they can have no need to employ their time to gain that, wherewith they already abound; and ſo being exempted from that one devouring expence of it, have a great ſtock to beſtow on other more excellent purpoſes: Whereas the poor Man hath ſcarce any vacant minute, or ſuch as he can call his own. They are all foreſtalled by thoſe preſſing neceſſities which lie unremoveable upon him. His day-hours are challenged by his labour, his nights by his reſt; and the ſatisfying of theſe claims ſo neceſſary, that his own ſupport, perhaps that alſo of a numerous family depends upon it; and therefore he may not attempt to defeat them. So that if *Time* be to be accounted a Treaſure, as undoubtedly it is, here is a ſecond ſort of Poverty to which he is expoſed as a reſult of the former; and another manifeſt inequality between him and the *Gentleman*.

4. The Advantage of Power and Authority.

5. A fourth is that of *Authority*, by which I mean not that which belongs to thoſe which are advanced to Publick Office; for that being peculiar to ſome few only, will not bear a diſtinct part in my preſent conſideration: But I underſtand by it that more private influence which *Gentlemen* generally have on thoſe that are their *Dependents*. And this alſo may be reckoned an effect of the former, their Wealth: For in proportion to that, the number of Servants, Tenants, and Penſioners, (yea, perhaps of Friends too) is to be meaſured. And over all theſe they have ſomewhat (tho' not of abſolute deſpotical dominion, yet) of ſway and prevalency. On the other ſide, the poor Man's authority is bounded within the narrow

circuit of this little Cottage, being in effect no other than the propagation of that Power Nature hath given him over his own body, to thoſe Branches which ſpring from it, his Children; and to that Cien which is ingrafted into it, his Wiſe. And if he ſhall but peep out of this little Principality, attempt to enlarge his Territories, and preſcribe to any Foreigner, he will ſoon be taught how little his power is acknowledged, and conſequently how great a diſtance he ſtands in this particular alſo from the *Gentleman.*

5. The Advantage of Eſteem and Reputation.

6. The fifth is that of *Reputation* and *Eſteem*; which as the World goes, is a ſhadow that waits only on the greater Bodies. Wealth and Honour are the things that render any perſon conſiderable amongſt Men, prepare them with an aptneſs to embrace his Dictates, to conſider his Counſels, to tranſcribe his Copies. And though now it often falls out to be an unjuſt meaſure, yet perhaps it may have no unjuſt Original. For if ſuch perſons did make uſe of thoſe advantages they have, to make their Minds as rich as their Fortunes, this were but their due. And therefore if it be paid them upon this ſuppoſition, it is they only that are guilty of the injuſtice, by defeating the ground of it. But by what tenour ſoever they hold it, 'tis ſure, it may be made an apt Inſtrument to many good purpoſes, and therefore well deſerves to be accounted into the number of their advantages. But now if you look on the poor Man, you ſhall ſee him loaded with Contempts, from which no inward excellencies he poſſeſſes can reſcue him. It is the obſervation of the wiſeſt of Men, that *the poor man's wiſdom is deſpiſed, Eccleſ.* 9. 16. So hated and ſcorned a thing is Poverty, that it ſeems the Fate of it is infectious, and caſts reproach upon the moſt eſtimable things that cohabit with it. The world is ſo full of inſtances of this truth, that we need go no higher than our own times. But if we ſhould look back, we may find one as ancient as *Job*, who in his own perſon experimented theſe diſtant effects of Proſperity and Adverſity. While he was in a flouriſhing condition *Men gave ear to him, and waited and kept ſilence at his Counſel. After his words, they ſpake not again, and his ſpeech dropped on them, Job* 29. 21, 22. But in the next Chapter we find the Scene quite changed, and this reverenced and adored perſon is become a *ſong and a by-word to the baſeſt of men.* I ſhall readily acknowledge this injurious treating of the poor to be a great Barbariſm. But though there can nothing be inferred from it as *de jure*, yet its being ſo *de facto*, proves all I am about to aſſert, *viz.* The great unevenneſs that is (in this inſtance, as well as the former) between Gentlemen and their Inferiours.

All theſe Advantages are beſtowed on Gentlemen to improve, and not to abuſe or miſ-imploy.

7. Having given this Schedule of undeniable *Privileges* they enjoy, I ſhall, before I proceed farther, beſeech him then here to make a ſtand, and ſoberly to conſider whether it be imaginable, that God hath put ſo many excellent inſtruments of Action into their hands, only to make them leſs active? That were to accuſe the Divine Wiſdom of ſuch an unskilful kind of managery, as the ſhalloweſt Humane Providence falls not under. Will any of them be at the care and expence to furniſh a *Servant* with all Materials and Utenſils for work, with no other Deſign, but that he may ſpend his time either in ſleep or riot? If they will not, I ſhall ask how they would like a Servant that ſhould ſo abſurdly pervert their intentions? And according to the anſwer they give to that, leave them to conclude of their own acceptableneſs with their great Maſter; who not only in a ſingle inſtance, but in an habitual courſe behave themſelves as prepoſterouſly. I cannot ſee how ſuch a reflection, if made with any ſeriouſneſs, can miſs of being attended with a ſevere ſelf-condemnation. And then that being ſo

proper a *baſis* and ground-work, ſhould methinks by a kind, even of natural energy, invite them to ſuperſtruct on it more Noble and Chriſtian purpoſes; that they who are ſo apt to expect Adoration from others, ſo willing to be Idoliz'd, may not yet any longer be willing to be indeed Idols (*have mouths and ſpeak not*, &c. *Pſal.* 135. as many unactive powers, as thoſe have Organs) but may rather aſpire to ſome degree of reſemblance to that Divine Eſſence, whoſe operations are as Inceſſant as Excellent, and by an unintermitted Induſtry in employing thoſe advantages God hath put into their hands, anſwer his deſign in beſtowing them.

SECT. IV.

The Branches of his Calling founded in the firſt Advantage, that of Education.

That Gentlemen have a Calling, and what it is.

1. I Preſume it is by this time rendered ſufficiently evident, *That a Gentleman hath a Calling*; it is now ſeaſonable to advance, and ſhew *what that is.* And of this the ground hath already been laid in the laſt *Section* by the enumeration of thoſe *peculiar Advantages* he poſſeſſes; which being thoſe Talents committed to his managery, his Calling will be the moſt exactly anatomized and diſtributed into its parts, by unfolding thoſe ſeveral Branches of his Receits, and examining what improvements each of them is capable of, which as ſo many diſtinct Limbs make up the entire Body of his calling.

2. This I ſhall do, not only in the groſs, but ſeverally, through every one of them, and ſhall take the liberty of doing it with the addition of a double reflection; the one on the *contrary practice*, the other on *the pleaſure* and ſatisfaction that will infallibly attend the diſcharge of *this Duty*.

Education the firſt Advantage peculiar to Gentlemen,

3. I begin with that of their *Education*; the former part whereof commonly commences as timely as the firſt Exerciſes of their Reaſon. It is ſo creditable a thing to have Children put into an early nurture, that there are few Parents ſo careleſs of their own Reputation, as to neglect it, but do either by themſelves, or ſome others, to whom they aſſign the charge, put them under ſuch a *Diſcipline* as may break their natural rudeneſs and ſtubborneſs, mould them into ſome form of Civility, and teach them that firſt Fundamental Leſſon of Obedience, on which all future inſtructions muſt be built. And this is an huge advantage, not only towards the ſucceeding parts of Education, but toward the regularity of the whole life. For by having their Infant-paſſions thus checked and bridled, they become more tame and governable ever after. The next part of Education, is *Erudition* and inſtruction, and under a Succeſſion of this they are for many years. Scarce any that owns the name of *Gentleman*, but will commit his Son to the care of ſome Tutor, either at home or abroad, who at firſt inſtills thoſe Rudiments, proper to their tenderer years, and as Age matures their parts, ſo advances his Lectures, till he have let them into thoſe ſpacious Fields of Learning, which will afford them both Exerciſe and Delight. This is that *Tree of knowledge*, upon which there lies no interdict: Which inſtructs not, as that in *Eden* did, by ſad and coſtly experience, but by fair and ſafe intuitions, and may well be looked on as a principal Plant in that *Paradiſe* wherein God hath placed this rank of Men.

which qualifies them for many excellent purpoſes:

4. Theſe two parts of Education united, qualifie a Man for many excellent purpoſes. It will be impoſſible to enumerate all, becauſe a mind thus ſubdued and cultivated, muſt yet owe the opportunities of many acti-

ons to outward circumſtances and occaſions; which being various and accidental, can with no certainty be brought into the account. But abſtracting from theſe, there are divers more intrinſick benefits which nothing but a Man's ſelf can fruſtrate; and thoſe alone I ſhall inſiſt on.

The underſtanding is thereby cultivated and improved;

5. Firſt, a Man thus Educated is better prepared to reſiſt all Errors that may invade his *Underſtanding*: His diſcerning Faculty is more nimble and agile, can ſuddenly ſurround a Propoſition, and diſcover the infirm and feeble parts; and ſo is not to be impoſed upon by ſuch ſlight Sophiſms, as captivate whole herds of the vulgar. This Advantage, it is apparent, he hath, and it is his *duty* to make uſe of it, to examine cautiouſly the grounds of an Opinion, before he give up his aſſent to it, and not to betray his Reaſon, either to his ſloth, by neglecting to give it a competent diſcuſſion; or to his Intereſt, by electing Tenents rather by their profitableneſs than their truth. This certainly is the leaſt that is ſuppoſable to be required of them in this particular, and ſure it is ſo moderate an injunction, as the moſt mutinous humour can have no temptation to quarrel at. For who could think him a ſevere impoſer who having furniſhed a Man with a light to direct him through ſome dark paſſage, ſhould only require him not to blow it out?

which conduceth much to the well inclining and diſpoſing of the Will,

6. And as he hath this Advantage in reſpect of his *Underſtanding*, ſo hath he, in the ſecond place, in relation to his *Will*: Which though it be a free faculty, and conſequently cannot be forcibly determined to any thing, yet it is capable of perſwaſions and inducements, and is uſually bended and inclined by them. It muſt therefore be a fair ſtep towards the rectifying of the Will, when the Intellect is ſtored with Arguments and Incentives to goodneſs. And this Learning muſt be ſuppoſed to provide for, unleſs we will exclude out of the Scheme, both Morality and Divinity; for each of thoſe will yield variety of ſuch Arguments. *Morality* will preſent Vertue as perfectly amiable in it ſelf, and ſo fit to be embraced for its own ſake: And not only ſo, but alſo as highly profitable and advantageous to us, as being that which gives the ſublimeſt perfection to our Natures, the ſweeteſt reſt and tranquillity to our Minds; and in a word, a full ſatiſfaction to all our Rational Appetites. *Divinity* confirms all this, and ſuperadds what infinitely tranſcends it, the aſſurance of thoſe eternal and glorious rewards in another World. And theſe ſurely are ſuch tempting *allectives*, as are very proper to attract the Will to chuſe what appears thus excellent, thus deſirable, provided they be juſtly preſented to it. And the doing that, the preſſing theſe motives home upon the *Will*, and that in refutation of all the contrary deceivable pretenſions of vice, is the firſt part of their obligation. But then there is alſo a ſecond, and that is, that they permit themſelves to be perſwaded by ſuch efficacious arguments, and actually conform their Wills to theſe dictates of their underſtanding, that is, That they really and effectively be ſuch men, as their Education directs and requires them to be: Which being the work of their *Wills*, 'twill be abſurd to plead impoſſibility or infirmity, ſince 'tis maniſeſt they may if they will; which is ſuch a degree of liberty, as ſerves in all other inſtances to denominate a man a free Agent, and ſuch as all puniſhments and rewards both Divine and Humane are founded on.

and to the right ordering and governing of the affections:

7. A third Advantage is in relation to his *Affections*; which being the inferiour and more brutiſh part of the man, are yet ſo impetuous and aſſuming, that they are very apt to uſurp the dominion over the nobler faculties; and where they gain it, the event is anſwerable to what we ſee in States, where the common people have wreſted the Scepter, all is put into confuſion.

Now that which may prevent theſe civil broils in the Soul, and ſecure the government to the proper Sovereign, may be well reputed an advantage. And to this, nothing merely humane is more conducing than *Education.* For firſt, that early diſcipline which we preſumed, one part of it puts a bridle in the mouths of theſe head-ſtrong paſſions, which by many repeated acts of reſtraint at laſt forget their native ferity, and become more calm and tractable. But then erudition compleats this conqueſt, backs this unruly beaſt, and by a dextrous managery not only reſtrains, but guides him, and makes him ſerve to many uſeful purpoſes, renders theſe mutinous Rebels not only captivated ſlaves, but good Subjects, obedient to the laws of Reaſon. All this Education is of it ſelf aptly diſpoſed to do, if Men will not take the Beaſt's part againſt it, encourage him to plunge till he have thrown the Rider. And all that is in this particular required of them, is but to hold faſt thoſe reins that are thus put into their hands, to keep their Affections in ſuch a juſt ſubjection that they may receive, not give laws. Thus we ſee the influence which Education hath on all the eſſential part of a Man's mind. And were it here ſo immured and cloſed up, that it could make no ſallies at all thence, did the Soul, like *Gideon's fleece*, ingroſs *all this precious dew*; yet whilſt that received ſuch liberal infuſions, it would irrefragably evince this to be no mean inconſiderable advantage. But it is indeed impoſſible it ſhould be ſo confin'd; for if it be permitted to make theſe impreſſions within, as heat in the centre fails not to diffuſe it ſelf to the circumference; ſo certainly will it extend and manifeſt it ſelf in the more viſible effects; all the products and emanations of a mind thus regulated will own their original, bear the image of their Parent.

The benefits whereof appear, 1. In the affability and obligingneſs of their behaviour;

8. And firſt his *Behaviour* will be affable and civil, not inſolent and imperious; as one that knows Humanity and gentleneſs is a common debt to Mankind, and therefore will not think fit to contract or dam up his civility into ſo narrow a compaſs, that it ſhall ſwell into complement, and mean flattery towards thoſe above, and not ſuffer one drop to deſcend on thoſe beneath him: But diſperſe its ſtreams ſo, that all channels may be filled with it. 'Tis true, the depth of ſome will require a greater proportion to that filling than others; and there 'tis not to be doubted but he may be more liberal; only in the mean time the ſhallower are not to remain dry. Let the inequality be ſuch as proceeds only from the capacities of the Subjects, not from the partiality of the Agent, and he prevaricates no part of his duty in this matter.

2. In the civility of their ſpeech and language;

9. Secondly, his *Words* will be temperate and decent, the product of judgment, not of rage. For he that hath calmed his paſſions, hath nothing to betray him to raſh, angry, or rude language: This is a foam which is caſt up only by the billows of a turbulent tempeſtuous mind; and can never be the iſſues of a ſerene compoſed temper. To this it is but proportionable, that they be alſo weighty and material. *A wiſe man's words,* ſaith the Son of *Sirach, are weighed in the balance*, and therefore he that hath improved his Education to that pitch of proficiency, will ſurely look his diſcourſe be ſuch as may anſwer that character, which muſt at the leaſt ſuppoſe it to have ſomething of ſolidity, no man ever attempting to put froth and bubbles into the Scales. And not only ſo; but it muſt alſo preſume it to have ſomething of uſe and value; for, whoever takes pains to weigh what for its uſefulneſs and meanneſs he intends to caſt out as refuſe? And both theſe qualifications are very eſſential parts of a *Gentleman's* dialect, the one oppoſed to light and fooliſh, the other to unſeaſonable

diſcourſe. For as the one hath nothing of weight (unleſs it be that of a burthen to the hearers) ſo the other can have nothing of uſe, nor conſequently of worth, that being to be meaſured by the aptneſs of it to the perſons to whom it is addreſſed. It ſhould be the endeavour of thoſe whom God hath endued with knowledge, to convey as much of benefit and inſtruction to others as they can: In order whereunto 'tis neceſſary they adapt their ſpeech to the capacities of thoſe they treat with, otherwiſe let them diſcourſe never ſo elaborately, they will rather confound than edifie, and appear to affect more to boaſt, than communicate their knowledge.

3. In the choice of worthy and ſuitable imployments:

10. Laſtly, His *Employments* will be worthy and ingenuous. A Man that hath this *inward* Nobility of Mind ſuperadded to that of his Birth, will abhor to buſie himſelf viciouſly or impertinently; he hath thoſe qualifications, which render him uſeful, and he muſt give himſelf thoſe Exerciſes whereby he may become the moſt eminently ſo. If by juſt authority he be aſſigned to any publick charge, he is to embrace it chearfully; not as a prize either to Ambition or Covetouſneſs, but as an opportunity of Vertue; a ſphere wherein he may move the moſt vigorouſly in the ſervice of God and his Country. But this happening but to few, it is neceſſary he have ſome other reſerve of action. And ſuch ſurely; he that induſtriouſly deſigns it, cannot want: Wherein though perhaps his influence will not be ſo general as in that, yet it may fall very auſpiciouſly on many. And when all thoſe occaſions are exhauſted too, when all direct operations are at a ſtand, he may yet betake him to the reflex'd, employ his activity upon himſelf, which will always remain a proper object of his induſtry, he being though a rich, yet ſtill ſuch an improveable ſoil, as will incourage and reward his Husbandry, though never ſo often repeated. And now I ſhall preſume it apparent, That *Education* is a moſt eſtimable Treaſure, a precious *Mine* that contains ſo many rich veins. O, why ſhould any that poſſeſs it, ſuffer themſelves to be poor, meerly for want of diligence in digging out the *Ore*?

But Gentlemen now do commonly defeat all thoſe good ends of their Education:

11. And would to God that were an impertinent complaint, ſuch as none were concerned in. But they that look on the Manners of many that have had this happy inſtitution, will find too great cauſe to wonder and bewail, that ſo hopeful a Seeds-time ſhould produce ſo ſlender, nay, ſo degenerate a Crop: As if *Job*'s curſe were here exemplified, *Job* 31. 40. *Thiſtles to grow inſtead of Wheat, and Cockle inſtead of Barly. Plutarch* tells us of a *voice frozen in the midſt of a River*, that became *audible by the thaw*, and applies it to Moral Precepts taught in youth, but actuated by age. The Simile ſpeaks him to have lived in better times: For in theſe, the voice diſſolves with the Ice, leaves not ſo much as an Echo behind it. Men now make it the buſineſs of their riper years, to unravel not the follies, but the learning of their youth: No ſooner are they got from under the Diſcipline of others, but the firſt act of it they exerciſe, is upon thoſe notions which have been inſtilled into them. And here they are ſuch ſevere *Lictors*, that the mildeſt infliction is to gag and bind them, deprive them both of voice and motion. Nor are they ordinarily ſatisfied with this, but as if they feared they would, like impatient Captives, watch ſome advantage to break looſe again, their final doom is *Oſtraciſm*, they and their Lineage; all ſober Counſels derived from them are utterly expulſt, ſo totally raſed out of their minds, that not the leaſt footſteps of them remain. And all this under the name of *Pedantry*, a title, which it is probable their great averſeneſs to their Teachers ſuggeſts to them, as the moſt pathetick reproach; as if they meant now to be revenged on

Learning and Tutor together, for attempting to make them wiſe againſt their wills.

12. And now when the root is thus ſtockt up, there is little expectation of Fruit. And therefore he that ſhall here look for thoſe forementioned effects of Education, will be more diſappointed, than *Chriſt* ſeemed *to be by the fig tree*; that, though *fruitleſs*, yet afforded *leaves*. But here we are not to hope for ſo much, no ſign that ever there was ſuch a plant in the ſoil. Let us briefly review thoſe ſeverals, and ſee what of them is ordinarily to be met with.

For, firſt, They neglect the improvement of their underſtanding, except it be in the principles of ſin and vanity;

13. And firſt for the reſiſting of errors, we uſually find *Gentlemen* no *Heroes* in this point: Their *underſtandings* are as pliant, and ſeducible, as thoſe who never had their means of fortifying them. And if they do indeed reject Errors, it is commonly by the ſame Engine, wherewith they caſt off Truth, *viz.* their inconſideration of both, as not being able to endure ſo much ſeriouſneſs and intention of mind, as may ſerve to *enter* them of any opinion. They have tranſplanted their diſcerning faculty from their intellect to their *Senſes*, and find it there ſo full, ſo inceſſant imployment, that it can never be at leiſure to revert to Scholaſtick diſquiſitions. They can diſcern exactly the moſt minute error in their garment, hold their Artificer moſt rigidly to the Laws of the *mode*, are moſt exquiſite Judges in all that relates to vanity or pleaſure, and can they ever think fit to trouble their heads (whoſe leaſt *Lock* muſt not for a world be diſturbed) with abſtruſer ſpeculations, who have found out ſo much more eaſie exerciſe of their faculties? If any ſhall think this character partakes of the Satyr, I ſhall beſeech him to compare it with the true ſtate of our young *Gallants* in this point, and then upon the ſame account that cold and ſcanty praiſes go for detraction, I ſhall expect this very imperfect and partial accuſation may paſs for a Panegyrick.

whereby their Wills are corrupted into a diſlike of vertue and love of vice;

14. Next for the regulation of their *Wills*, that advantage depends ſo much on the former, that of their Underſtandings, that what evacuates that, muſt neceſſarily be ſuppoſed to do the ſame for this alſo. It is not imaginable that he who hath defaced all his principles, whether moral or divine, or at leaſt never revolves or conſiders them, ſhould receive any influence from them, ſince they operate not but by a diſtinct application. And here ſhould I ask many *Gentlemen*, when they ever ſo much as attempted any thing of this ſort, I fear they would be forced to quarrel at the incivility of the queſtion, to evade the neceſſity of anſwering it. But God knows their actions ſpeak too loud, that their buſineſs is to obey, not to preſcribe; to fulfil, not to regulate their *Wills.* Nay indeed 'tis too frequent, that inſtead of conforming their wills to their principles, they model and transform their principles to their wills, herein verifying *Ariſtotle's* obſervation, *that pleaſures are corruptive of Principles.* And ſo by this one art of inverſion, the face of things is quite changed; Virtue which their Books repreſented to them, as lovely and honourable, is now thought to have gained that luſtre only by the flattery and varniſh of the Painters, and ſo is decried as the moſt unamiable, deſpicable creature: And on the other ſide, all the contrary vices are taken from under that black veil, Philoſophers or Divines have put upon them, and are furbiſh'd and trimm'd up, ſet to open view, as the moſt ſplendid, glorious things, the moſt adorning accompliſhments of a *Gentleman.*

and to ſuch a degree as to queſtion either the Holineſs or Being of God.

15. And to ſecure this tranſmutation, even God himſelf muſt have his part in it, be concluded to have been all this while miſ-repreſented in thoſe characters of *Purity* and *Juſtice*, his Word has made of him, and to have

laid no ſuch ſevere reſtraints upon Men, as that tells us of. That *Temperance*, *Chaſtity*, *Self-denial*, *Mortification*, &c. were but the creations of ſome melancholy *Recluſes*, who would then enviouſly impoſe thoſe bands upon others, wherewith they had fooliſhly fetter'd themſelves; that God is more indulgent to Mens appetites, which they may ſatiate here, as they pleaſe, without thoſe future dangers Preachers fright them with. That this is the new *Gentile Divinity*, we need not appeal to Mens lives, their words openly proclaiming it, not without much ſcorn and contempt of their eaſie ſimplicity, who govern themſelves by the other. Yet as if this would not ſufficiently provide for impiety, as if they were conſcious of that abſurdity, which indeed there is in defining God an abettor and favourer of vice, many have advanced a ſtep higher, taking a more compendious courſe, and ſince they cannot bring God over to their party, make him ſuch as will ſerve their turn, will unmake him, by becoming flat Atheiſts. Of this there are too too many inſtances, and 'tis to be feared will be many more, whilſt to all other ſenſual allurements that opinion makes to its Proſelytes, this is added, that it is become a *creditable* thing, the badge and ſignature of a modern *Wit*, thus to be one of *David*'s fools, in ſaying, *There is no God.*

Their affections hereupon become brutiſh, irregular, and diſorderly;

16. In the next place, let us deſcend to the *Affections*, and ſee what effect of their Education is diſcernible there. And truly that ſeems to be no other than what is obſervable of a dam, but to intercept the courſe of ſome rapid ſtream, which ſo ſoon as it is either removed or born down, the torrent guſhes with ſo much the greater violence, for having had that oppoſition: So here, when the reſtraints, which bridled their minority, are taken off, their paſſions ſwell to a higher degree of impetuoſity, they ceaſe to be Boys and Men together, the Man is diſmounted, loſes the reins, and is dragg'd whither the fury of the beaſt directs. A ſad change, yet daily too viſible in many: For alas, what is more ordinary than to ſee *Gentlemen*, under the dominion of theſe brutiſh appetites? Sometimes to tranſported by a *Rage* to the greateſt Undecencies, nay dangers; ſometimes hurried by a *Luſt* like the *poſſeſt perſon*, *Mark* 9. 22. through *fire and water*, the moſt deſperate deſtructive attempts, and have nothing but rottenneſs and diſeaſe as the final prize of all thoſe difficult adventures; ſometimes drowned in ſwiniſh *Intemperance*; and ſometimes again intombed in the *Earth*, buried as it were alive by ſordid covetouſneſs, as if they meant tranſcribe, though not the innocence, yet the *ſufferings* of the *Primitive* Chriſtians, in being torn in pieces by *wild beaſts*. Oh, that they might once be brought to relinquiſh this abſurd fortitude, that thoſe who laugh at the precept *of turning the other cheek*, *Matth.* 5. 39. would not here infinitely over-act it; and give up themſelves to be buffeted, yea ſlaughter'd by theſe their cruelleſt enemies, nor be ſuch *Platonick* lovers of Martyrdom, as to chuſe only this, whereto there is no Crown annexed, but what is worn in the Kingdom of darkneſs.

their behaviour proud and imperious towards their inferiours, flattering and diſſembling towards their Betters;

17. And now ſince we are thus to ſeek of theſe *inward* effects, we can with no reaſon hope for any of thoſe *outward*, which are the reſults and conſequences of theſe. And then 'twill be no wonder to obſerve *Gentlemen* behave themſelves diſdainfully and imperiouſly, as if they could not ſet a juſt value on themſelves, without the unjuſt contempt of others. 'Tis true indeed, this is commonly a wind that blows but one way, down the hill; only upon thoſe below them, upwards they breath gentler gales; it being one of their moſt ſtudied faculties, to perform all acts of the moſt ſupererogating Civility to thoſe above them. But when that Civility is

throughly ſcanned, it will prove a greater injury than the contrary Rudeneſs; 'tis made up of ſuch hollow profeſſions, ſuch groſs flatterers as are much worſe than reproaches, nay ſeldom fail to be actually ſeconded with them; there being nothing more uſual, than to revile and deride thoſe at a diſtance, whom, when preſent, they admire and adore. And theſe now become ſuch eſſential indiſpenſable parts of good breeding, that the want of either inevitably betrays a man to the title of a ſilly Ruſtick; Flatteries and Deſpiſings being the two contrary elements, whereof he, whom they call a *Fine Gentleman*, is to be compounded.

their diſcourſe vain, frothy and trifling.

18. This gives an account alſo of ſome part of his *Dialect*, which thus far anſwers little to thoſe requiſite qualifications, Weight and Uſefulneſs; there being nothing more trivial or uſeleſs, than theſe two parts of converſation, and 'twere well if no worſe Epithets belonged to them. But if we look alſo into the reſt, they will ordinarily appear to carry proportion with theſe: 'Tis every man's obſervation, that *no ſpring will riſe higher than its firſt head*; and then words being but the iſſues of the Mind, where that wants the ballaſt of ſober and vertuous Notions, 'tis no wonder if the diſcourſe be light and airy. 'Twere eaſie to exemplifie in the ſeveral ſorts of it adapted to the ſeveral humours of men; but 'tis alſo ſo needleſs, that the copy would be too exact by tranſcribing the impertinence too. But what ſuch frothy diſcourſe is naturally, the moſt ſerious may become by accident: And thus we ſee it the infirmity of ſome, who ſo far retain their Education, as to have their minds better repleniſhed to vent their plenty ſo unſeaſonably or affectedly, that it produces nothing of benefit to the hearers, but rebounds injuriouſly with the aſperſion of vanity upon themſelves.

Yea, many times ſcurrilous, filthy and profane;

19. But ſuch is the miſery of this Age, that it were a fair compoſition, if *Gentlemen* could be perſwaded to reduce their *Diſcourſe* only to a privative ſort of Illneſs, 'twere ſomewhat tolerable, if as on the one ſide they did not *miniſter Grace*, *Eph.* 4. 29. ſo on the other they did not breath infection on the hearers. But alas! what are all thoſe profane ſcoffings at Piety, ſo frequent among them, but as ſo many blaſts and malevolent vapours to nip and deſtroy the practice of it? And ſo we ſee it too commonly does among thoſe whoſe greener reflections ſet them not above their malignant influence. How does their immodeſt and obſcene talk diſperſe and ſcatter their own impure fires, to the inflaming of others? And whilſt they inſcribe upon theſe Poiſons the inviting names of Ingenuity and *Eſprit*; they do not only tempt men greedily to imbibe them, but even defame and proſtitute that which they pretend to, render it a *Wilderneſs* for all ſavage rudeneſs to range in, and make as many *Candidates* for that reputation, as there are impious and beſtial men in the world. And to this ſort of *Wit* they have found out a very proportionable Rhetorick, I mean that of their *Oaths*, that helliſh piece of Oratory, which ſo overſpreads their language, that (like a profuſe Embroidery that even quite hides the Stuff) it becomes the moſt remarkable part of it. 'Tis not a little ſtrange how this fouleſt deformity hath gotten to paſs for an embelliſhment and ornament of Stile; but that it doth ſo, is very viſible not only from the no pretence of other temptation to it, but alſo from that affected and ſtudied variety obſervable among them, as if they had the ſame concernment for their Diſcourſe, which they have for themſelves, *viz.* that it may every Year appear in ſome new piece of Dreſs, have ſome Oaths freſh minted to ſet it off.

20. To all theſe we may add their vain *Boaſtings* and aſſumings, which are often ſo deplorably ridiculous, that 'tis doubtful whether more pity or contempt belongs to them. Thus oftentimes, he that has but croſt the Seas to fetch a Feather and *fantaſtick Mien*, brags more of his Travels, than if he had paſs'd the *Line*, and felt the ſcorchings of the Torrid Zone. And upon the ſtrength of this he takes authority to impoſe on others the moſt abſurd and incredible Relations; yet ſtill impoſing more perniciouſly on himſelf, *i. e.* a belief that he appears very illuſtrious and glorious in all this, and on that confidence the ſmiles which his auditors mean in ſcorn, ſhall be taken in applauſe of him, and ſo encourage thoſe follies they deride.

and attended with ridiculous boaſting and oſtentation;

21. Indeed where this vain humour dwells, it will betray it ſelf in innumerable indecencies of ſpeech; but never does it give it ſelf a fuller or worſe character, than when it lets looſe to anger and rage, one of the moſt genuine and fruitful branches of this bitter root. And this we frequently ſee overflow in all the invenomed reproachful language imaginable, ſuch as one would wonder ſhould fall from the mouth of any, whoſe Education had not been wholly barbarous; an inverted kind of Eloquence, whereto ſome, who have been taught the rules of better Rhetorick, have a great fluency.

which ofttimes breaks forth into rage and reproachful language.

22. If now we ſhould proceed to take a view of their *Imployments*, there is little doubt but that *Tekel*, *Dan.* 5. 27. might be a proper inſcription on them, yea a mild one too, Lightneſs and Vanity being many times the moſt innocent ingredient in them. And this is but a natural inference from the former: for ſince the Principle of Actions as well as Words is within, it will certainly operate alike in both; as Water ſent from one Fountain through ſeveral pipes, is the ſame, and hath equal vertues or faults in each. It were too eaſie to give as particular an account of theſe as the former; but fore-ſeeing an occaſion to do that in another place, I ſhall transfer it thither, as not deſiring to iterate the importunity on ſo ungrateful a ſubject.

23. And now he that ſhall conſider, that all this is but the partial Image and repreſentation of thoſe, who have had that Education we ſo much magnified, will ſure be tempted to ask *Judas*'s queſtion, *Ad quid perditio hæc? Why was all this waſte* of Diſcipline and Literature? To what purpoſe was ſo coſtly a foundation laid, when the ſuperſtructure is in the Apoſtle's phraſe, 1 *Cor.* 3. 12. nothing *but hay and ſtubble*? And I doubt many defeated Parents have cauſe to make this complaint; But I fear alſo divers of them may with juſtice accuſe themſelves as Acceſſories to their own diſappointments, who by an over-haſty deſire of ſeeing their Sons men, do at once anticipate and fruſtrate their hopes, evacuate the benefit of many years Education, by taking them too ſoon from under its benign influence. Which though it uſually ſpring from immoderate indulgence, is yet really the greateſt ſeverity; for what can be more ſo, than to tie them to all the labour and toil of the Seeds-time, force their Childhood to that ſtudy and intention of which that giddy Age is moſt impatient, and then ſnatch them away at the *Harveſt*; ſuffer them to converſe no more with Learning, when once they grow capable of receiving either delight or profit by it? Thus of late it hath been the method of Breeding, to poſt them with an inconvenient ſpeed from one ſtage to another, many times bringing them too ſoon to the Univerſity, but much oftner taking them too early from it, before they have near gained what they came thither to furniſh themſelves with. And from thence the next ſtep is over the *Sea*, which ſoon

Education and Learning is ofttimes ill beſtowed upon Gentlemen, and this through their Parents fault as well as their own.

waſhes away thoſe Notions, which lie crude in their brains, but have wanted maturity of years to digeſt into their manners. Indeed 'tis not imaginable how they ſhould retain them, they being at their coming abroad ſolemnly put in a direct courſe of forgetting ſpeedily what they formerly learnt, their whole time being then by order to be taken up in other unſpeculative exerciſes, wherein if they do happen to attain to ſome eminency, yet 'tis ſure but a dry exchange for what they quit for it. But then 'tis not one in twenty that arrives to that: The negligence of Governours, or their own headineſs, when they find the rein thus ſlackned, often makes their progreſs little in any thing they are appointed to; but inſtead of that, they run a full career in all debaucht pleaſures, advance there in an inſtant to the higheſt proficiency. I ſay not this to decry *Travelling* in general, but only the unſeaſonable time that is choſen for it. He that would really improve his Son by that means, ſhould ſend him at ſuch a mature age, when by the help of his foregoing Education his judgment is ſetled and qualified to make uſeful obſervations, his manners well weighed and fixed, that ſo he may be capable of all the good Foreign Climes can afford, and ſecured from the infection of the ill; like a Loadſtone, attract things of weight only, and not like Jet, draw nothing but chaff and ſtraws. But I confeſs this a digreſſion, and therefore return to thoſe who have thus embezled this precious Advantage, (and who have too much of their own wills in it, to be able to transfer the guilt upon any error of their Parents) beſeeching them ſeriouſly to lay to heart this their ſo ruinous ill husbandry, and to let at laſt ſome better fruits of that ſeed appear; not to ſuffer a piece of *Plate* left to the School or College, to be the only Teſtimonials that ever they were there, and ſo bring thoſe Societies under the reproach of extortion, of fraud, of profeſſing learning but imparting none, of having taken ſomething from them without giving them any valuable conſideration, making them any proportionable returns. But that they would at laſt take up this Talent thus long buried in the napkin, and yet fall a trading with it. And though the time they have loſt ſhould render them deſperate of the reward of the *Ten Cities*, 'tis yet motive enough to induſtry, to reſcue themſelves from the ſentence of the *Slothful Servant*. And yet that will not be all, for there being no middle ſtate between reward and puniſhment, he that delivers himſelf from the one, puts himſelf likewiſe into a certain capacity of the other. But beſides all he is to expect hereafter, he is ſure at the time of a very fair Antepaſt of pleaſure here, which he will immediately reap from it, as the firſt-fruits of the future rich harveſt, which though the Law commanded to be ſacrificed, yet ſuch is the indulgence of the Goſpel, that it exacts nothing, but that men would themſelves enjoy them.

Virtue and Piety conduce to our Temporal as well as Eternal welfare and advantage.

24. For ſuch is the admirable goodneſs of God, that he is generally pleaſed to adapt his commands, not only to our Eternal, but Temporal concernments; for knowing the impatience of our nature, that we love not to depend wholly upon reverſions, he hath been pleaſed to put ſomewhat of preſent guſt and reliſh upon every part of duty. This might be evidenced diſtinctly through the whole Codex of Chriſtian Precepts, his *Yoke is an eaſie*, nay, *gracious Yoke*; his *burden a light burden*, *Matth.* 11. 28. And from this general ground, I may have warrant ſufficient to affirm the like of this particular I am now upon. But it may be yet more clearly evinced, by reflecting on the ſeveral improvements of this Talent, which have been mention'd, as the *Duty* of all thoſe that poſſeſs it.

The great advantage of wiſdom, or of a good underſtanding well cultivated and improved.

25. And firſt, for that of an acute and *elevated Underſtanding*. I need appeal no further than to common Vote, to have that pronounced a very deſirable thing, it being hard to pick out a man of ſuch an avowed brutality, that will own the deſpiſing it. Even thoſe who will be at no pains to acquire, will yet profeſs to eſteem it. And we may believe them in earneſt, if from no other argument, yet from this, that every man affects the reputation of being Wiſe, is pleaſed when he ſucceeds in that aim, and on the contrary is not more troubled and diſcomfited at any thing, than to be taxed of Ignorance or Error. If any ſhall deny this, I ſhall ſuſpend his confutation till ſome body reproach him with folly, and then from the diſpleaſure he finds in himſelf, leave him to conclude his own value of Wiſdom. And indeed why do good men look upon a *fool* with ſo much pity, and ill men with ſo much ſcorn, if knowledge be not both a Felicity and a Credit? Nor is this the ſentence only of the vulgar who uſually admire thoſe things moſt, from which they ſtand at the greateſt diſtance, but eſpecially of the more diſcerning ſort of men, who from every taſte they have had of it, have had their appetites ſo raiſed, that they have inſatiably thirſted after the fuller draughts. This made ſo many of the old *Philoſophers* renounce the enjoyment of thoſe ſenſual pleaſures, that offered themſelves, to go in queſt after this one tranſcendent delight; and *Solomon* to prefer this in his election before Riches and Honour, the two principal parts of worldly ſplendor, to the rectitude of which choice God himſelf bears Teſtimony. And now if this be in it ſelf ſo valuable, ſo raviſhing a thing, ſhall its being here connected with duty prove ſuch an allay, as to deprive it of all the guſt? Certainly if it do, it muſt argue the palate very perverſe and diſtemper'd: For to all other, that one conſideration would give a reliſh and flavour to the drieſt, the moſt unpleaſant undertaking. The conſcience that I am now employed as I ought is ſuch a refreſhment as is able to ſweeten the ſevereſt labour, yea the greateſt ſuffering. Shame is a thing to which humane nature hath an innate abhorrence, yet the Apoſtles made it *matter of joy when it befel them for Chriſt's ſake*, *Acts* 5. 41. And ſhall this bleſſed Copy of theirs be transformed inſtead of tranſcrib'd? Shall thoſe who have not ſo much *Chriſtian patience*, as to bear the ſlighteſt reproach for him, have yet ſo *much unchriſtian ſtupidity*, as to endure the greateſt inoppoſition to him? Chuſe rather to be ignorant, when 'tis both their ſin and ſhame, than wiſe, when 'tis their duty and reward? Invert S. *Paul's* choice, and be fools againſt Chriſt, as he owns to be *for him*? If there be any ſuch *Antipodes* in our clime, their unhappineſs will yet ſerve to illuſtrate what they refuſe to partake of, *viz.* the felicity of having performed this part of duty in the improvement of the underſtanding.

The great happineſs of a rectifi'd and well diſpoſed Will.

26. In the next place the *regularity* of the *Will* is extremely both amiable and profitable. For that being an uncontroulable faculty, if it be wrong ſet, what torrents of miſchief and confuſion does it let in? If in all its conceptions it permit the ſenſual appetite to lay, like *Jacob*, its *pilled rods before it*, all its births will be *ring-ſtreaked, ſpeckled and ſpotted*. The ruinouſneſs of a perverſe will is ſo generally underſtood, that there is nothing renders a man even in common account more miſerable and deplored. He whoſe Will runs counter to his Reaſon, every man is *Aſtrologer* enough to read his *deſtiny*, and preſage his deſtruction. And by the undecent and pernicious effects of a diſordered, we may make an eſtimate of the beauty and advantage of a rectified Will. The former, like a vicious improvident Governour, expoſes his Territories to a deluge, firſt of Luxury, and then

of ruine: But this latter like a virtuous and prudent Prince, at once ſecures the innocence and felicity of his Subjects. Indeed it is this alone that really and effectively gives us the preeminence above beaſts. They have *choices* as well as we, and they have affections, but wanting the higher principle of *reaſon*, their choices are neceſſarily determined by their affections. Now if we who have both, are guided only by the latter, wherein does our ſtate differ from theirs; ſave only that our liberty makes us guilty, whereas their neceſſity leaves them innocent? I preſume I need ſay no more, to evince the happineſs of a well ordered Will, ſince none can conteſt it, but he muſt tacitly confeſs himſelf weary of his humane nature, and emulous, not of a greater dignity, but of a degradation to that of the Brutes.

The great pleaſure of having our Affections under good government and reſtraint:

27. And as much may be ſaid concerning the *Affections*, which if they be not curbed and held in by the Underſtanding, will have as free and uncontrouled a ſway in Men, as they have in mere Animals, but with worſe effects, by how much we have more objects to incite them, more inſtruments to actuate them than theſe have. If any man can be tempted to think this no unpleaſant condition, let him yet further conſider, that this metamorphoſis is not like the fanſied tranſmigration of the Soul, wherein it was ſuppoſed to aſſume the nature, and conſequently the paſſions but of one beaſt alone: No, here is the whole Wilderneſs let looſe upon a man, with all their contrary appetites perpetually combating one with another. He that hath the rapaciouſneſs of a *Wolf*, may yet have the timerouſneſs of an *Hare*, and ſo is racked between the deſire of having, and the fear of ſuffering. He that hath the luſt of a *Goat*, may yet have the intemperance of a *Swine*, and be diſtracted to which of the appetites to give himſelf. He that hath the cruelty of a *Tygre*, may yet have the willingneſs of the *Fox*, which will give him the pain of many irkſome delays, in attending an advantageous opportunity. And ſo proportionably in others. And what can be more unſupportably uneaſie, than to have theſe continual tumults within, to be in a ſtate of hoſtility, not only with other men, but with himſelf? Or what can there need, beyond this conſideration, to recommend the contrary condition to us? The ſubduing theſe brutiſh Inclinations is the introducing peace into a Land, haraſs'd and waſted with inteſtine War: And ſure none need be told (at leaſt in this Age) that that is a moſt raviſhing pleaſure. And I may with the ſame confidence appeal to the verdict of any who hath tried theſe two contrary ſtates, and doubt not but he will from his experience confirm the moſt profuſe and even Poetick declamation that can be made on this Theme.

All which advantages make up the greateſt part of Happineſs in Heaven.

28. All I ſhall add is, in a joynt relation to this and the two former, by obſerving that illuminated Underſtandings, regulated Wills and Affections, make up a great part of the *celeſtial happineſs*. The *Angels* of *light* would no longer have right to that title, without theſe. *The ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*, were improperly ſo ſtiled, *Heb.* 12. 23. had they not received this accompliſhment of their nature. And the greater degrees hereof we arrive to here, ſo much the more ſenſible anticipation have we of thoſe divine joys. And ſure thus to partake with Angels and Saints, is to be happy, and will be acknowleged ſo by all, whoſe value and wiſhes of a *Mahometan Paradiſe* render them not uncompetent to eſtimate theſe purer and refined pleaſures.

The great advantage of a courteous, friendly and gentle Behaviour.

29. If from hence we proceed to thoſe *outward effects*, which are the reſults of theſe inward, we ſhall find they are all full of delight and ſatisfaction. Courteſie and friendſhip of *Behaviour* does not only caſt a

glorious luſtre round about, attract the eyes and hearts of others, but it alſo reflects with chearful and comfortable gleams upon our ſelves. For, Man being deſigned by God for a ſociable creature, hath ſuch propenſions and inclinations put into him, as are proper to that end; and theſe are gratified and pleaſed when we ſo demean our ſelves, as may anſwer that intention, towards which nothing can be more neceſſary than this Debonair and gentle carriage. For that allures people to our converſation, whereas the contrary roughneſs frights and deters them, (the churliſhneſs of a *Nabal* makes men they *cannot ſpeak to him*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 17.) it gives a man part of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s fate, ſeparates him from among men, by forcing them to withdraw from him; and that the worſt part of it too; the *hairs like Eagles feathers, and the nails like Birds claws*, being much the lighter degree of the infliction, fit to paſs for dreſs and ornament, compared with that more deforming diſguiſe this rugged temper puts upon a man. And as on the one ſide, this moroſity and ſourneſs of humour is very uneaſie, ſo on the other is that form of fawning and flattering compliance which ſome call civility: It obliges men in many circumſtances to renounce their eaſe, their health, yea their underſtandings too, and keeps them in ſuch conſtraint, that one may truly ſay, a leſs meaſure of ſelf-denial would ſerve to conſtitute a man a good Chriſtian, than an exact Courtier; whereas he that keeps himſelf in a juſt mean, neither drives away one ſort of company, nor buys the other ſo dear; He has a Standard meaſure, by which to diſpence his Civilities, *viz.* the quality and worth of the perſons; and confounds not himſelf with thoſe more unjuſt and mutable rules of their expectations. So in the firſt of the inſtances he keeps himſelf a Man, whilſt the other is in ſome reſpect a Beaſt; in the ſecond he preſerves himſelf a Freeman, whilſt the other is a Slave: and ſure I may refer it to any Man's deciſion, which is the pleaſanter ſtate.

The Advantage of prudent, ſober and profitable Diſcourſe.

30. Next for the Words, 'tis not to be doubted but that calm and temperate Language has the advantage of that which is paſſionate and rageful; and that not only in reſpect of decency, but eaſe too; of which there needs no other teſtimony, than that viſible perturbation and uneaſineſs obſervable in all who are under ſuch a tranſportation. So in like manner, when the words are pertinent and weighty, they give not only more ſatisfaction to the hearer, but to the ſpeaker alſo: This may be judged by the contrary diſplacency men have at themſelves when they are conſcious to have ſpoken impertinently or undecently. By ſatisfaction I mean not that vanity, which men too often affect of ſhewing their parts, but a juſt and ſober complacenyc, ariſing from the conſcience of having regulated their diſcourſe by the meaſures of a Wiſe man and a Chriſtian, the having ſaid that which may be of benefit, but cannot be of miſchief to his Auditors. And this ſurely is a much more real pleaſure than any can be had in the contrary kind of dialect. If to this it be objected, that generally none are ſo much delighted with their own diſcourſes, as they who talk the moſt vainly and abſurdly: I anſwer that even theſe are not pleaſed with the vanity and abſurdity; their pleaſure reſults from a miſtake, ſuppoſing it to be the quite contrary. And this helps to evince, that ſolid and prudent ſpeaking gives ſatisfaction, ſince even the ſhadow and fiction of it can be made to yield to it.

The great ſatisfaction of ſpending our time well, and imploying it in a worthy manner.

31. Laſtly, for the employments, they ſurely muſt afford moſt of contentment, when they are moſt noble and excellent: They do ſo at the time in the direct line, they having more of agreeableneſs to the nature and dignity of a Man; but they do yet more ſo in the reflection, when a man looks

looks back upon this day or week ſpent, and finds his buſineſs has been worthy of him, it exhilerates and revives him, enables him to paſs his own approbation on himſelf, and as it were to anticipate the *Euge* he ſhall one day receive from his great Maſter. But he that gives himſelf only the idle divertiſements of a Child, or ſets to the baſer drudgeries of Vice, cannot reflect without confuſion: which is ſo well underſtood by ſuch perſons, that they are fain to take ſanctuary in a total inconſideration, never daring to ask themſelves, what have I done? Which bears full teſtimony to the excellency and felicity of ingenuous Imployments, ſince they that decline thoſe, are forced alſo to decline themſelves, grow out of their own acquaintance and knowledge.

No reaſonable objections can lie againſt this Duty in any of its branches.

32. And now what objection can there lie againſt this duty, which is in all the parts of it ſo advantageous and eligible, that it becomes duty not only to God, but even to themſelves, their own preſent intereſt and ſatisfaction? Shall Pleaſure it ſelf loſe its Nature, adopt the properties of its direct contrary, and become irkſome and abhorred, only becauſe 'tis twiſted with Obedience? Is there ſo perfect an Antipathy between God and them, that 'tis impoſſible they ſhould have the ſame objects of delight? Or can no Joys have any taſte with them, that are not the cauſes and forerunners of eternal ſorrows? This were ſuch a degree of perverſeneſs, as common Charity bids me not to expect; and I ſee not what elſe can evacuate the pleaſure that attends the improvement of this Talent of Education.

The want of Education ought to be repair'd by our own particular diligence and induſtry afterward.

33. After all this, I foreſee it not impoſſible, that ſome may plead an Exemption from this Obligation, by affirming they want the ground of it, that they never had this Education. I am not willing to fancy there have been ſo many unjuſt and unkind Parents as may qualifie any conſiderable number of *Gentlemen* for the Plea: But to thoſe few that can really make it, I ſhall not think the foregoing Diſcourſe wholly impertinent; for, by ſhewing them the Advantages of what they ſay they thus want, it may incite them (not to murmur at the negligence of their Parents, but) to attempt the repairing of it by becoming their own Guardians, putting themſelves into Diſcipline, and by the ſtrict Laws of Reaſon governing and reſtraining thoſe Paſſions; which by the liberty of their Breeding have got head, by this means ſupplying to themſelves the firſt part of Education: And the like may certainly be done for the latter alſo, if they will but depoſit that common error, of thinking it more manly to be ignorant than to learn, and be content to put themſelves in a courſe of Erudition, which a Man may do for himſelf in his Cloſet, as well as a Tutor may do for his Diſciple in a School; and though he want many of thoſe Advantages the other hath, yet 'tis poſſible they may be in a good degree ſupplied by that induſtry and deſire, which all thoſe are ſuppoſed to have, who are thus their own Pupils; and there want not inſtances of the ſucceſs of them who have thus attempted, but I confeſs there are too few Examples of the Attempt, Men being apt to ſit down contentedly under this want; whereas let the ſame perſons have an entailed Eſtate alienated from them by any Act of their Fathers, they are not then ſo tame, but will ſtruggle to the utmoſt to recover their rights. Yet certainly an Ingenuous Education is as properly the Birth-right of a *Gentleman*, as any the moſt firmly ſetled Inheritance can be: Why ſhould they then acquieſce in that ſo injurious an Alienation, and not ſeek by all endeavours of their own to retrieve this ſo precious a Poſſeſſion?

SECT. V.

Of the ſecond Advantage, Wealth.

The ſecond Advantage on the Gentleman's ſide is Wealth and Riches;

1. THE ſecond Advantage we are to conſider, is that of Wealth, which that it is a bleſſing will I know readily be aſſented to by all, Mens deſires and earneſt purſuits after it ſufficiently evidencing the general eſteem is had of it. Yet though the Concluſion be right, it is to be doubted many infer it not upon due Premiſſes. 'Tis not Riches ſimply conſidered that are the felicity, much leſs thoſe luxuries, to which they are often made to miniſter; but they are like to a fertile ground, which if left without culture, none bears ſo rank Weeds, but if rightly husbanded, yields abundant profit; and thus to manage and improve them is not only the Intereſt, but the Duty of all thoſe to whom God hath committed them; this being the one deſigned Advantage, for which they were intruſted to them.

whereof they ought to be provident, and good husbands;

2. Several Improvements there are, of which they are capable; but before I proceed to them, I muſt mention one part of Duty, as fundamental to all the reſt. And that is the well husbanding of them; not in a figurative, but real ſence, the having ſuch a provident care of thoſe goods and poſſeſſions, wherewith God hath bleſt a man, as may ſecure them from that Conſumption, to which careleſneſs and ſloth will infallibly betray them. This ſurely is obligatory in many reſpects. Firſt, in Thankfulneſs (I had almoſt ſaid civility) to God, who having diſpens'd them as a liberality, 'tis ingratitude, yea affront to give them no regard. Secondly, in Juſtice to a Man's poſterity: He that has received a fair Inheritance from his Anceſtors, if he ſuffer his ſupine negligence to cut off the Entail, he defrauds thoſe that were to have ſucceeded him in it, and becomes that *troubler of his own houſe*, to whom Solomon, Prov. 11. 29. aſſigns no other *Inheritance* but the *Wind*, which is indeed all ſuch a perſon is like to derive upon his Iſſue, the common air being oftentimes their only Patrimony. Thirdly, in order to all thoſe ends to which Wealth was deſigned by God, which depend on this, as Accidents on their Subjects, and ſo are all at once evacuated and nulled by the diſſipating of that wherein they are founded. All which conſiderations do naturally inforce upon Men the neceſſity of a prudent managery.

and reſt contented with their fair portion of worldly Goods.

3. This being ſuppoſed, and the perſon having, as in our Law-forms is uſual, covenanted to ſtand ſeiſed of the Eſtate, let us now ſee what are the proper uſes, to which it is to be limited.

In the firſt place, we may rank that of Contentedneſs in his portion; which though to one that is to wreſtle with want it might ſeem a hard precept, yet to him that flows with abundance it might be thought rather a needleſs than difficult injunction, if experience did not teſtifie, that contentment is oftentimes as great a ſtranger in Palaces as Cottages.

Rich men may chearfully enjoy, ſo they do not abuſe their Wealth;

4. Of this excellent both Virtue and Felicity, there are two parts, the one a chearful enjoyment of ſo much of his Wealth, as may decently (I ſay not vainly) ſupport him in that quality wherein he is placed: God does not make Rich Men ſuch meer Conduit-pipes of Wealth, that they muſt paſs all, without retaining any thing themſelves; but rather like the Earth which though ſhe conveys the ſprings through her veins, yet is allowed to ſuck in ſo much, as may give her a competent refreſhment; and he that does this moderately, and with a thankful reflection on that liberal

Providence, which thus *gives him all things richly to enjoy*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. falſifies no part of his truſt, nor abuſes his ſtewardſhip, this being, as it were, the allowed Fees of his Place, a Penſion allotted him by the bounty of his Lord.

yet ought to ſet bounds to their inordinate and covetous deſire after more, when they have enough already.

5. The other part of contentment is that, by which the deſires are terminated within the bounds of his own poſſeſſions, and not ſuffered to range wildly into other Mens, like *Ahab*'s into *Naboth*'s *Vineyard*, uſing their Wealth, as Anglers do their Fiſh, to bait Hooks for more, by making it an Inſtrument of extorting from others; which is ſo great a guilt, that it nearly concerns them to ſecure themſelves againſt it, by a perfect ſatisfaction in what is properly their own. Nay, even in what is ſaid, there is caution to be had, that there be not too eager and vehement endeavours of multiplying it, and that not only by an unlawful commixture with other Mens, which is the ſin either of oppreſſion or fraud, but even from its own ſtock, for that may be covetouſneſs, and is ſurely a direct oppoſition to the divine diſpenſation. For when God hath given a Man a full fortune, and by that manumitted him from thoſe carkings and ſolicitudes to which needier Perſons are expoſed, for him to make it his grand buſineſs to project how he may add to that heap, or in the Prophet's phraſe, *lade himſelf with thick clay*, *Hab.* 2. 6. What is it but the degrading and pulling himſelf from that Sphere wherein God hath placed him, a voluntary ſale of himſelf to the Gallies or Mines? In this reſpect therefore I may not unaptly apply that exhortation which the Apoſtle makes in another, *Gal.* 5. 1. *Stand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made you free.* Let not him whom God hath by a gracious and peculiar providence exempted from this meaner ſervitude and vaſſalage to the World, relinquiſh that ſo valuable a privilege, give up his *ear* to be *bored* by *Mammon*, when God proclaims a *Jubilee*. Yet 'tis poſſible the quality of ſome Mens eſtates may be ſuch, that they may be capable of advancement by a moderate and eaſie Induſtry, ſuch as may no way divert them from more excellent Imployments, but may rather be a recreation than a toil: And in that caſe I know no obligation lies on them ſo to defie an Improvement, as not to chuſe a profitable, before an expenſive divertiſement, to ſpend thoſe vacant hours upon that, which remain by way of overplus from more worthy deſigns and entertainments. But the perpetual ſolicitous purſuit after more wealth, is certainly a culpable inordinacy, as being inconſiſtent with that contentment and acquieſcence which is the duty of every Man for whom God hath thus liberally provided, and ſuch as will beſides be likely to undermine another main part of this obligation.

Charity in relieving the poor and neceſſitous is a duty bound upon Rich Men.

6. Such in the next place we are to account the Charitable diſpenſing of his ſtore, to ſupply the indigencies of wanting perſons; which ſurely is to be lookt on as the grand and moſt conſiderable end of his receipts. God, who is the common Friend, as well as Father of all Men, is not to be imagined ſo partial, as to provide pomps and luxuries for ſome, and in the mean time leave others deſtitute of the neceſſary ſupports of life; yet if we look no deeper than the viſible portions of Poor and Rich, there is no evidence of the contrary. But when we examine upon what Conditions and Proviſo's that Abundance is conveyed, we ſhall have no temptation ſo to aſperſe or *charge God fooliſhly*: For though he have not diſpenſed ſo immediately to the Poor, yet he gives them, as it were, Bills of Aſſignment upon the plenty of the Rich, a right to be ſupplied by them: So that the difference ſeems to be only that of an Elder, and Younger Brethren; the Elder uſually carries the bulk of the Eſtate, but then that is charged with

Proviſions for the Younger; and if the quantity of thoſe be not diſtinctly expreſt, but left indefinitely, that act of Truſt in the Father lays the greater obligation on him, not to deceive it by too mean and ſcanty a diſtribution; for now himſelf is become a Father to them, and therefore ſhould proportion his bounty by the tenderneſs and bowels of that moſt affectionate relation. And this may not improperly be deemed one reaſon, why among ſuch multitudes of commands of Charity in the Goſpel, there is yet none that expreſly allots the proportion of our Alms, that by this act of confidence, as it were, Men might be obliged to the higher liberality: And he that ſhall make this Incentive to it, a pretence to excuſe the want of it, is ſure a moſt criminous perverter of the divine intention, treacherouſly countermining God's ſacred Arts, as if 'twere not enough to rebel, unleſs in a further contempt he aſſaulted him with his own weapons. Certainly God never deſigned *Lazarus*'s portion ſhould be made up only of the *Crums from the Table*: For though indeed *Dives* is taxed that he gave not them, yet if he had, ſuch a dole would ſure never have reſcued him from the place of torment. He who reſts in a Rich Man's boſom in Heaven, is to have ſome proportionable treatment from thoſe on Earth, ſome more hoſpitable reception than a lying at the Gate, ſome better Chirurgeons than Dogs to cure his Sores; and thoſe that refuſe it him, muſt be preſumed to contemn not only the *Lazarus* but the *Abraham*, yea the Heaven too that receives him, ſince that which qualifies him for an admittance there, is not able to recommend him to their leaſt regard.

The meaſure and proportion of our charity is not mentioned in Scripture.

7. I ſhall not attempt to proportion Men's Charities, ſince God hath not; yet there are ſome general meaſures to be made to bound them on the ſinking ſide, that they fall not to too ſcandalous a lowneſs; which having been done already by a * better Pen, I ſhall refer the Reader thither. But thoſe yet leave Men's Compaſſions full ſcope to grow up to what greater height God's grace and Men's exigencies ſhall advance them: And ſurely the latter may ſometimes be ſuch, that it will become every Rich Man not only to rifle his Coffers, pour out whatſoever his ſuperfluities have there amaſſed, but alſo to defalk much of his own accuſtomed enjoyments, cauſe the Raſor to paſs even upon his whole Equipage, to cut off all Excreſcencies, all exuberant Expences, that ſo the ſtream may run the fuller in that one channel which God's providence thus cuts out for it. Whether this may not be a proper ſeaſon for it, I leave every conſidering perſon to judge. At the preſent I ſhall beſeech every Man to whom God hath given Wealth, ſadly to ponder how ſcandalous a thing it will be for him who has been the Object of ſo great Bounty, to decline the being an Agent in any; to diſcover himſelf to have ſuckt in nothing of the virtue, amidſt ſuch an influence of the commodities; and to defie the Example of that Liberality, by whoſe effects he lives. But withal let him conſider the danger of it alſo, how dreadful a guilt (and conſequently vengeance) he draws upon himſelf, if he ſhall defeat this ſo mean end of his receipts. It is indeed a complication of many crimes not only againſt Man but God alſo: I ſhall inſtance only in two, moſt generally decried, and yet moſt eminently contained in it, Unthankfulneſs, and Falſeneſs.

* *Dr.* Hammond*'s practical Catechiſm.*

Uncharitableneſs is a ſin of great Ingratitude and Perfidiouſneſs.

8. God in his Wiſdom diſcerning that Equality of Conditions would breed confuſion in the World, has ordered ſeveral ſtates, deſign'd ſome to Poverty, others to Riches, only annexing to the Rich the care of the Poor; yet that rather as an advantange, than a burden, a ſeed of more Wealth both temporal and eternal. Now in this diviſion of Men, thoſe on whom he hath cauſed the better lot to fall, can owe it to nothing but his gracious

diſpoſal; and therefore had been certainly obliged to ſubmit to any the moſt difficult tasks he ſhould have diſpenſed to them. But now that in his great indulgence he has ſo tempered the command, as to render it not an allay, but an enhancement of the mercy, he that gives it only a bare taſtleſs compliance, betrays himſelf to want a juſt ſenſe of it; but he that flatly reſiſts it, is in the moſt tranſcendent degree barbarouſly ingrate. Nay, I think I might have laid the charge higher, and called it malice; for what beneath that can provoke a Man thus to reſiſt his duty and intereſt together.

9. Nor is this all, 'tis alſo the greateſt Perfidiouſneſs: Every rich Man is, as I ſaid before, God's Steward, and particularly intruſted to provide for the indigent parts of his Family, ſuch are the poor and needy. Now if he leave them deſtitute, and ſuffer either his riot or covetouſneſs to feed upon their Portions, what more deteſtable falſeneſs can be committed, not only in reſpect of them, whoſe right he thus invades, but of God alſo, whoſe truſt he abuſes? Many other enormities there are in Uncharitableneſs, which as ſo many miſ-ſhapen limbs concur to the making up this deformed Monſter; but I ſhall ſuppoſe it ſufficient to have pointed out theſe two, which being the moſt profeſtly contrary to ingenuity, I muſt hope will carry a very averting appearance to thoſe who ſo eſpecially pretend to that quality.

Rich men ought not to make their Wealth the occaſion either of pride or confidence;

10. To this poſitive part of duty, the being *rich in good works*, we find the Apoſtle connects a negative, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. *Charge them that be rich in this world that they be not high minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches.* And we need not reſort to implicit faith in the Author, to perſwade us of the great propriety and fitneſs of theſe cautions; 'tis too evident that Pride and Confidence are diſeaſes that uſually breed in full and opulent fortunes, and as they ſpring from the ſame root, ſo do they, like neighbouring branches, mutually ſhelter and ſupport one another. He that is highminded, abhors the ſubmiſſion of any foreign dependence, and therefore gladly anchors on any thing he can call his own; and thinking his Wealth moſt properly ſo, he has as great an aptneſs, as holy *Job* expreſſes an averſion, to *make gold his hope, and to ſay to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence, Job* 31. 24. On the other ſide he that truſts in his Wealth, is by that fortified in his pride. It is *Ariſtotle*'s obſervation, that *wealth makes contumelious* and inſolent; which I preſume he infers not only from experience, but reaſon alſo; for the ground-work of humility being the ſenſe of impotence and defect, he that aſſumes a ſelf-ſufficiency, undermines that foundation, and inſtead of it lays the *Baſis* of the quite contrary temper, all haughtineſs and elation of mind. A memorable example of this we have in the inſolent reflections of *Nebuchadnezzar, Dan.* 4. 30. which had withal ſo diſmal a conſequent, as, methinks, ſhould like *Lot's wife*, remain a perpetual Monument to deter others from all approaches towards the like vanity.

becauſe they have nothing but what they receiv'd from the free Grace and Bounty of God,

11. And certainly it is a moſt important concernment of rich Men, to fence themſelves againſt this double temptation; to which purpoſe they can hardly find a more compleat armour, than what they may borrow from one ſhort ſentence of the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. *What haſt thou that thou haſt not received?* Let them look on themſelves as meer Receivers, and then with what pretence can they pride themſelves in that wherein they are barely paſſive? Nay indeed if it be throughly ſcann'd, theſe Receits imply cauſe rather of ſhame than boaſting; the being filled from another's hand is a ſure Argument (and tacit reproach) of a natural and original emp-

tineſs; and if God hath dealt ſo liberally with them, they may collect 'tis in compliance not with their merits, but infirmities; his having made them rich is a ſtrong preſumption, he ſaw them not prepared to be innocently poor: And ſure Pride muſt be a ſubtle Alchymiſt, that can hence extract matter of vanity, and might with equal Logick have perſwaded the *Jews* to glory in thoſe Indulgences, which were granted them only for the *hardneſs of their hearts.*

which may be withdrawn and taken from us at his pleaſure.

12. In like manner if they reflect on their *riches* as received, it renders them alſo a moſt unfit object of *Truſt*. For if they were given, they may alſo be taken away. We hold all by that old *tenure*, which the Lawyers ſtile *Alodium*, becauſe it is from none but God: and his gifts (of this kind at leaſt) are never ſo abſolute, as to exclude power of revocation. He then that enjoys a thing not upon right but bounty, muſt ask his benefactor how far he is to preſume on it. And if they would do ſo in this caſe, they would ſoon be reſolved how little confidence were to be repoſed in wealth. They may hear *God* the great Patron tell them by *Solomon*, that *riches make themſelves wings, and flie away as an Eagle, Prov.* 23. 5. by *Chriſt* that the *Treaſures* which they lay up here are liable to the *Moth, and Ruſt, and Thieves*; and by the *Apoſtle*, that they are *uncertain riches.* Nay indeed, if they would but ask themſelves, their own daily experience and obſervation, that would bear the ſame teſtimony, every day almoſt gives ſome renewed inſtance of it. What multitudes of accidents are there to which Mens goods are liable? A rough Wind, a tempeſtuous Sea ſinks at once the Merchant and his Ship; an ill ſeaſon, an hungry ſoil eats out the Husbandman: And they who run not either of theſe hazards, thoſe whom neither the water nor the earth ſwallow up, a Fire may yet conſume. And can there any ſecurity be fanſied in that wealth, which is thus a prey to each element ſingle, and yet more often to them united in Man to whoſe frauds or violences more have owed their impoveriſhing, than to any of the former accidents? And now what greater infatuation can there be, than to place a truſt on that which is ſo flitting and unſteady, to lean on a broken read, or in *Solomon*'s phraſe, *to ſet ones eyes upon that which is not?*

The uſeleſneſs and inſufficiency of Riches in many caſes of neceſſity.

13. But if by an impoſſible ſuppoſition, we ſhould imagine Riches to be as permanent, as they are indeed tranſitory: Yet unleſs they had as well *Strength* as conſtancy, they could with no reaſon be depended on. He that ſtays by his friend to the laſt minute, if he have no power to aſſiſt him, is only a ſpectator, not a reliever of his ſufferings. And alas, how many miſeries are Men ſubject to, in which wealth can give them no aid! Is a Man afflicted in his body with pain? The *Indies* are not a competent price for a minutes eaſe, an hours ſleep. Is he perſecuted in his Name with reproach? 'Tis not whole *Ingots* of gold that will ſtop the mouth of Fame: Nay oftentimes the obloquy is it ſelf merely the progeny of his wealth, that breeding envy, and envy detraction. But if the ſore lye yet deeper, if it be the *Soul* that ſuffers, that is yet farther removed from poſſibility of relief this way. If it ſuffer as a ſlave under the dominion of ſin, no treaſure can redeem from that vaſſalage. Wealth does indeed too often by adminiſtring temptation ſtrengthen thoſe chains, but it cannot break them, as appears too evidently by the number of ſuch rich bondmen. If it groan under the guilt of ſin, labour under the terrors of an accuſing Conſcience, alas! Gold is no balm to a wounded ſpirit: The luxuries which that has ſupported may help to pierce, but it has no power to heal. Or laſtly, if the Soul fall finally under the puniſhment of ſin, there is no commuting that penance, buying off that ſmart; Riches abuſed may indeed

ſwell the account, and multiply the ſtripes, but they can never bribe the remiſſion of any. The Wiſe Man hath aſſured us this, *Prov.* 11. 4. *Riches profit not in the day of wrath.* Nor does this carry any oppoſition to the counſel of our Saviour, *Luke* 16. 9. of *making friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs*: For he refers not there to any natural or inherent property of riches, but only to that extrinſick and accidental advantage may be made of them proportionably of what was ſaid before of the *unjuſt Steward*, whoſe dexterous managery was it that rendred his Lord's debts ſo uſeful to him; not that they had any proper innate vertue to ſecure him from the neceſſity either of begging or digging. And therefore we ſee Chriſt's words run not in an Annunciative, but an Exhortatory ſtile: He tells us not that *Mammon* ſhall make us friends, but excites us to make that our own care, and by a prudent diſpoſure to make it ſubſervient to an end above its native efficacy. But all this is ſure very reconcileable with that natural impotency we have obſerved in it. Wealth charitably diſpoſed may have excellent effects, but yet thoſe are to be aſcribed to the charity, not the wealth, which ſtill remains in its own eſſence the ſame unactive lump in the Cheſt that it was in the Mine, like the heathen Deities, unable to protect its moſt zealous Idolaters. As a further inſtance whereof I may add that which will ſound very like a riddle, that Riches cannot deliver even from preſent Want: Which yet is demonſtrably true in all thoſe rich Miſers, whoſe bellies are lank, while their coffers are full; a ſort of Tantalized creatures, not peculiar only to this latter Age, for we find them deſcribed by *Solomon*, *Eccleſiaſt.* 6. 2. *A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth and honour, ſo that he wanteth nothing for his ſoul of all that he deſireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof.* So unſignificant a thing is wealth, that without the addition of a new power, it enables him not to receive the leaſt benefit from it.

14. When all this is conſidered, what is there in wealth that can invite the leaſt confidence, ſince it appears ſo utterly unable to ſecure men in their moſt important intereſts, nay to do that which it moſt immediately and moſt colourably pretends to, the keeping them from want? And therefore he that will not run himſelf upon that ſad defeat of being diſappointed in his truſts, failed in his greateſt exigents, muſt look out for ſome firmer ground whereon to build. But alas! our ſoil affords it not, all here below was long ſince pronounced by one that wanted neither wiſdom nor experience, to be Vanity. Such mutations and viciſſitudes attend all ſublunary things, that he that attempts to erect any durable ſatisfaction on them, out-does the folly of that abſurd architect Chriſt mentions, and builds not on the *ſand*, but *water*: And in this ſence the world is ſtill under a deluge, not ſo much dry ground, as where a Dove may reſt her foot.

Our chief Help and Truſt, notwithſtanding all our Riches, ought to be in God the giver of them all.

15. We are then driven by way of neceſſary refuge to that which ſhould be our voluntary choice, to come home to the *Ark* to ſhelter our ſelves under his wings, where alone we may ſecurely reſt, and according to the advice which the Apoſtle ſubjoins to theſe cautions, to *truſt in the living God.* And to do this amidſt all the ſeducements of Wealth, to ſee through all thoſe miſts which the fumes of Plenty raiſe, and whilſt they enjoy the gift, to confide only in the Giver, is indiſpenſably the duty, and ſhould be the care of every one, to whom S. *Paul* directs this charge, *All that are rich in this world.*

Rich men ought not to abuſe their Wealth to Intemperance and Exceſs.

16. And ſuch in the laſt place are to take notice of another branch of their obligation, and that is to uſe that advantage which their Wealth gives

them towards the exerciſe of *Temperance:* Which indeed can never be known to be truly ſuch, but when there are opportunities and temptations to the contrary. He that hath nothing wherewith to maintain a Riot, leaves it doubtful both to others and himſelf, whether his Abſtinences be the effects of Poverty or Temper; but he that has all the fuel for Luxury, and yet permits it not to kindle, he approves his Sobriety to be indeed his Choice, not his fate. And this is a moſt excellent privilege of Wealth: And though 'tis to be doubted it ſcarce finds room in moſt of our Catalogues, yet certainly it merits a principal place, as being much the greateſt of all thoſe, which reflect only upon the perſon himſelf. This reſiſting of Temptations is truly that Heroick courage worthy of thoſe that pretend to Honour, fit to denominate a *Gallant man.* I wiſh thoſe who ſeek that reputation by many raſh and unwarrantable Adventures, would here entertain their youthful Ardours, this being a Field where they may be aſſured never to want Combatants. One while *Gluttony* preſents it ſelf, armed with the allurements of a full and delicate Table: And though one would think him but a deſpicable Aſſailant, that has only the Kitchin for his armory, yet experience ſhews us, thoſe edgeleſs weapons may vie with the keeneſt for the mortalneſs of their effects. At another time *Drunkenneſs* ſends a Challenge by delicious Liquor, cheerful and diverting Company, and that not without menace of infamy to him, who ſhall own ſo much religious cowardiſe, as to fear to hazard his Sobriety in the encounter. Sometimes again *Luſt* attaches him with the piercing darts, the killing glances of a proſtitute Beauty. In the mean time *Pride*, the moſt ſlie and treacherous of all the reſt, is perpetually laying ambuſhes for him in the adorations of his Flatterers, the vanity of his Attire, and innumerable kinds of Exceſſes. And now what *Knight-Errand* would wiſh for more Encounters? Or why ſhould men range abroad to invite Quarrels, whileſt they tamely ſuffer ſuch troops of enemies to bid them daily defiance? 'Tis, they ſay, a *Maxim* among the *Swordmen,* That *he that has once been baffled, is ever after an incompetent Challenger.* I wiſh it might have this one ſober application, that men would ſuſpend all other *Duels,* till they have righted themſelves on their Vices, and by ſome ſignal Conqueſts redeemed themſelves from that obloquy and defamation, which theſe mean, yet inſulting, Adverſaries have expoſed them to.

Many men to be blamed for neglecting the improvement of their Eſtates.

17. Having ſhewed what Uſes are duly to be made of *Wealth,* let us now look back, and conſider whether any of them be ordinarily diſcernable in *Practice.* And here we ſhall meet with one ſort of men, who ſtumble at the very threſhold, that fail in that firſt part of duty, on which all the reſt depend: I mean thoſe who by a ſupine negligence ſuffer their *Eſtates* to moulder and conſume inſenſibly, for want of an eaſie inſpection and overſight. Of ſuch as theſe, former Ages have afforded inſtances, and doubtleſs the preſent alſo, though the number of the luxurious waſters do now ſo overwhelm them, that they are the leſs diſcernable. And tho' this ſeem to be the effect only of ſloth, yet certainly there are other concurrents to it, generally theſe two: Firſt ſuch an overweening of their wealth, that they think it inexhauſtible; and ſecondly an opinion that it is a mean and peaſantly thing for a *Gentleman* to give himſelf the trouble of looking after his fortune. The motives are too ridiculous to deſerve a confutation; but in the mean time it cannot but extort pity, to ſee *Families* ruined by ſuch vain whimſies. And what tolerable account can ſuch a Parent give to his beggar'd Off-ſpring, to whom 'tis very likely he may propagate the pride and ſloth which made the mere managery of an

Eſtate too hard for him, and yet withal bequeaths them the ſadder toil of getting one? Nay, what account can he give to God, from whom he received it, in order to ſeveral ends, if he thus at once defeat them all? 'Twas a Command to the *Jews*, that they *ſhould not cut down Fruit trees*, though it were for ſo neceſſary an uſe as to *advance a Siege*, *Deut.* 20. 19. But this is the hewing down that ſtock, from which ſo much good Fruit ſhould ſpring, and that without any pretence either of neceſſity or reaſon.

and for not being contented with their own, and invading that of their neighbours;

18. Our next view will preſent us with *another* ſort of *perſon*, who as much tranſgreſſes the duty of contentedneſs in both the parts of it. 'Tis no prodigy to ſee men, whom God hath afforded the portion of the rich, ſcarce to allow themſelves that of the poor; ſo letting their *eye be evil* even to themſelves, *becauſe God is good.* The *Egyptians* were ſuch jealous Reverers of thoſe Creatures which they worſhipp'd, that he that violated them was in *danger of ſtoning*, *Exod.* 8. 26. So theſe men who have ſet up their Wealth for their God, pay it ſo much veneration, that as they are impatient to have it invaded by others, ſo they are afraid to offer the leaſt violence to it themſelves. They have inſhrined it to receive their adorations, and it is now become Sacrilege (indeed the only one they ſcruple) to debaſe it to the ſupply of their neceſſities. They are ſtrange auſterities which the *Votaries* of this Deity will endure, even beyond the mortifications of the moſt rigid *Aſcetick*. Their whole lives are a perpetual contradiction to all the appetites of Nature; yet alas! That infers here no compliance with thoſe of Grace, but as if they meant to ſet up a *Third* party in the world, they equally oppoſe theſe. And now he that thus oppreſſes himſelf, no wonder if he do the like to others, if he extort the utmoſt that either power or fraud can wring from any. And that this work may not be retarded, he is provided of variety of inſtruments for it. Sometimes Bribery muſt give him a legal colour to rob his neighbour. Or if a Witneſs prove a better *penny-worth* than the Judge, Subornation ſhall do the buſineſs. Sometimes Extortion ſhall prey upon a needy Creditor, and that not only with the ſlower gnawings of a Canker, but with the more ravenous devourings of the Vulture. Sometimes the Rack is brought out, and a poor Tenant faſtned on it, and there ſo ſtrained and diſtorted, that he can never knit again to any competent ſubſiſtence. Sometimes again a poor neighbouring Prodigal ſhall be ſpurred on to further riot, fed with money, that ſo by a forfeited *Mortgage* he may ſeize on his Eſtate. In a word, 'twere endleſs to reckon up all the engines of rapine which this greedy Invader hath in his magazine. And of ſuch a one I preſume every man will pronounce, that he notoriouſly violates the precept of Contentedneſs.

and coveting more than they have real occaſion for;

19. But though this be the groſſeſt, yet is he not the only Tranſgreſſor. There is alſo *another* more plauſible ſort, who though they do not thus ſeek to encreaſe their wealth at other mens coſts, yet do it too much at their own: Whoſe brains are mere forges of Projects, perpetually hammering out ſome new Contrivance for gain, that continually travel in birth of ſome freſh improvement, ſuffer all the pangs and throws of a carking ſolicitude in purſuit of it. I know this piece of *Covetouſneſs* hath better luck than the reſt, and paſſes for a creditable thing, under the ſpecious name of good husbandry; but ſure if it be throughly penetrated, it will appear no leſs oppoſite to Contentment than the former. Nor can that guilt be invaded by thoſe that ſay, they ſeek to advance their Fortunes, not out of the Miſers deſign of hoarding up, but out of the more generous purpoſe of living more ſplendidly. For ſure he that covets more

to ſpend, is as little contented in his portion, as he that covets more to lay up: He that thinks his Table too ſcanty, his equipage too low, is as far from being ſatisfied, as he that thinks his land too little, his bag too empty. So that 'tis apparent theſe arrows come out of the ſame quiver, though they be ſhot at ſeveral marks.

whereby Charity and Almſ-giving is greatly neglected and diſabled.

20. And between both theſe motives of griping no wonder if the *Duty of Almſ-giving* be crouded into a very narrow compaſs. That excellent vertue of Charity has indeed much of the image and impreſs of *Chriſt* upon it: But the World has given it a further kind of conformity with him than he ever deſign'd, its crucifixion between Covetouſneſs and Luxury, being the counterpart of his *hanging between the Thieves*. There wants only one member of the parallel, the *breaking the legs* of theſe *Malefactors*, which God knows our *Soldiers*, nay many Armies of them have not been able to do. The many inſtances theſe times have given of the ſudden diſſipation of mens Idolized heaps, have not yet ſo diſciplin'd the Worldling, as to perſwade him to *lay up his treaſure in Heaven*. And the loud calls of God to weeping and *mourning and girding with ſackcloth*, have moſt prepoſterouſly been Echoed back with the louder noiſe of mens revellings, and wild jollities. And then they who thus deſpiſe the judgment of God, are very unlikely to compaſſionate the miſeries of men, and I doubt there are many who thus anſwer the character of the unjuſt *Judge*, *Luke* 18. *that neither fear God nor regard man*, nay that far outgo him in inexorableneſs of temper. He was to be wrought upon by *importunity*; but ſo petrified are theſe mens bowels, that no prayers nor tears can diſſolve them. 'Tis a much eaſier task to dig Metal out of its native Mine, than to fetch it out of the covetous man's Coffer. The Earth, though ſhe hide, yet ſhe guards not her treaſure, 'tis acceſſible to the induſtry of any that will ſearch for it: But he like an *Argus* ſtands Centinel about his, and ſounds an alarm upon the remoteſt appearance of a poor ſuppliant. With what jealouſie does he eye any that he can but fanſie to come upon that ungrateful errand, and then how many arts has he to prevent the aſſault? Or if by ſome extraordinary Charm all his eyes have ſo ſlept at once, that he happen to be ſurpriſed, yet he has ſo many weapons of defence, that the aſſailant ſhall gain little by it, but the ſhame of an open repulſe, being ſure to find him impregnable. As for the *Voluptuary*, he has ſo many expenſive luſts to maintain, that he has difficulty enough how to gratifie all them in the diſtribution of his wealth: They are competitors to each other, yet join to keep out that which would be a common one to them all. He that grudges not the wildeſt profuſions of his wealth, yet thinks an Alms will undo him. 'Tis the grand buſineſs of his life to contrive ways of expence: Yet when any object of charity preſents one, he becomes thrifty on the ſudden, like the *Senſitive plant*, ſhrinks at that touch, and that open hand of his clutches as faſt, as if ſome convulſion had contracted it. Thus totally have men forgot upon what terms their wealth was given them, and thereby like miſerable Chymiſts, extract Poiſon out of Cordials, a Curſe out of a Bleſſing. Riches were deſigned by God to be ſubſervient to that Compaſſion which he has implanted in humane nature: But now they are become the means of ſuppreſſing and eradicating it. Rich men look upon poor, as if they were creatures of another *ſpecies*, things wherein they were perfectly unconcerned. 'Tis *Strada*'s fancy, that there is ſuch a *ſympathy raiſed between two Needles touched by the ſame Loadſtone, that perſons at the greateſt diſtance may by the conſent of their motion maintain a correſpondency*. I ſhall not undertake for the truth of the Experiment, but however methinks

thinks 'tis matter of reproach to us, that theſe inanimate creatures ſhould have ſo much obſervable accord, as to give pretence for ſuch a conjecture, whilſt men who have ſo many undoubted principles of union both from nature and grace, have quite extinguiſhed all effects of them. That too many have ſo, there needs no other evidence than the many unſuccour'd extremities of the Poor. For how elſe can it become poſſible, that one rank of men ſhould gluttonize, and another ſtarve? That he that thinks it death to endure either the want or moderation of a Meal, ſhould never conſider what are the gripings of the ſtill empty ſtomach? That he ſhould without all regret ſee his own humane nature pining and languiſhing in the perſon of his poor brother, whilſt in himſelf 'tis oppreſt with the quite contrary exceſſes, and might be relieved in both by a more equal diſtribution?

The great ſin of uncharitableneſs in thoſe that have wherewithal to do with, and yet will not.

21. And now who can ſufficiently deplore the wants of the Poor, ſhall I ſay, or rather the inhumanity of the Rich! This ſurely is the ſadder ſpectacle of the two: The one only ſuffers, the other ſins. And that ſuffering too may end in eternal refreſhments, whereas the other in endleſs torment. *Lazarus reſts in Abraham's boſom,* when the uncharitable *Glutton fries* in perpetual *flames.* And oh that this were throughly weighed, that they would conſider that every degree of unmercifulneſs they ſhew to others, reverts with a rebounded force upon themſelves! Alas, 'tis not ſo much the poor man's Body, as their own Souls that ſue for their Alms. And whenever they ſhut up their bowels of compaſſion from the one, what do they but σφραγίζειν ταμεῖα *ſeal up* God's *ſtore houſes* and treaſuries from the other? When they deny the *crumbs* from their *table,* they deny themſelves *a drop of water to cool their tongues.*

Many men maintain their Luxury at the charge of the Poor, by taking no care to pay what they owe them.

22. But I fear this of Illiberality may paſs for a moderate crime in this Age, when ſo many are guilty of another ſo far tranſcending it. For do we not ſee divers, who inſtead of abating their Exceſſes to relieve the Poor, do *maintain* their Riot upon them? If the deſperate *Debts* of poor Tradeſmen were examined, I doubt not this would appear a ſad truth. 'Tis become ſo faſhionable a thing to run into Scores, and ſo unfaſhionable to pay them, that he is ſcarce thought well-bred, that has not bankrupted one at leaſt of each Trade he deals with. Their only care is to get credulous Merchants, who ſo long as they truſt ſtoutly ſhall have fair words, but if once their faith fail, then, as if the *Solifidian* doctrine had ſtretcht it ſelf into Traffick as well as Divinity, they are pronounced Reprobates, and as ſolicitouſly avoided as the *Separatiſt* ſhuns a perſon whom he is pleaſed to call carnal. Poſterns and obſcure paſſages are contrived, on purpoſe to eſcape them; ſo that a poor Creditor muſt give many days, nay months attendances, before he can ſo ſurpriſe a *Gentleman,* as to come but to ask his own; and then the beſt return he uſually meets with, is ſome empty promiſes to bribe a delay. But ſometimes he fares much worſe, and as if 'twere a crime not to ſtarve ſilently, he is reviled and reproached and harſh and contumelious language become his only payment. It has been received as a Maxim, *That we are all kind to our own creatures*: But this caſe ſhews 'tis no univerſal rule; for thoſe who thus make poor men, are of all other the moſt barbarous to them in their poverty. But let thoſe who thus ſhuffle off their reckonings with men, remember that there will come a day, when they ſhall not be able to decline their Account to God. And with what horror and confuſion muſt they appear at that Audit, when they ſhall be charged not only with the miſpending their own Eſtates, but other mens, the having added robbery to unmercifulneſs?

23. If in the next place we ſhall reflect on the Apoſtle's caution of *not being high minded* or *truſting in uncertain riches*, we muſt turn to our Bibles to be ſatisfied there was ever any ſuch charge given, there is ſo little of it to be read in mens practices. Humility is a plant, that is carefully weeded out of all rich grounds, accounted a mean degenerous quality, that like Treaſon *attaints* the bloud, and forfeits Nobility. *Gentlemen*, though they are for the moſt part very guiltleſs of the *Phariſee's* abſtinence, the *faſting twice a week*, do yet tranſcribe the worſe part of his copy, the thinking they are *not like other men*, and believe it a juſtice they owe their birth to do ſo. They have mounted themſelves aloft, and looking down from thoſe Pinacles of Honour, all below ſeem little and contemptible creeping things of the Earth, *Worms and no Men.* I am not ſo for confounding of Qualities, as to exact they ſhould chuſe their Intimates and Companions out of the loweſt rank. I know Prudence as well as Pride has drawn a Partition-wall between them (though perhaps the latter has raiſed it to an unneceſſary height) but I wiſh it might be remembred, that as the Precept of *Not eating Bloud* was deſigned not for it ſelf, but as an Hedge againſt Murther, ſo that juſt diſtance, which Order recommends between the Noble and the Mean, is valuable only as a fence againſt baſe and ignoble practices; true greatneſs conſiſting in deſpiſing not the perſons, but the vices of the vulgar. Yet here alas! The ſcene is quite changed, and many who look the moſt faſtidiouſly on the one, will yet mix freely with the other; and while they ſoar the higher in the opinion of their ſuperiority, do yet ſtoop to the ſordid beſtialities of the moſt abject of men. Nay, indeed this Lure does ſometimes make many of them deſcend even from their punctilio's, and thoſe who at another meeting muſt have lookt for no other treatment but what S. *James* deſcribes, *Jam.* 2. 3. *Stand thou there, or ſit here under my footſtool*, ſhall in the rounds of good fellowſhip be equal with the beſt: Such a Leveller is Debauchery, that it takes off all diſtinctions. But in the mean time how great a ſhame is it, that ſuch vicious motives ſhall have force enough to make them thus degrade themſelves, when all the Engagements of Chriſtianity are not able to do that which is much leſs, to abate any thing of thoſe tumours, thoſe ſwelling conceits of their own greatneſs, or (in the *Pſalmiſt's* phraſe) to make them *know themſelves to be but Men.*

Rich men are very apt to be puft up with Pride and Contempt of others on the account of their Wealth;

24. Nor has the *other* branch of the caution any better ſucceſs among them. 'Tis in many of them too diſcernable, that they place that *Truſt in uncertain Riches*, which they ſhould repoſe only in the *living God*, ſo making his Gifts his Rivals, and raiſing him a Competitor even of his own Bounty. For this we need no other ways of probation, than only to examine, whither it is, that in any caſe of difficulty or diſtreſs they make their earlieſt and moſt importunate addreſſes, for there we may conclude them to fix the greateſt confidence. And I fear 'tis too apparent, that where wealth makes but any the ſlighteſt pretences, promiſes the leaſt aid, though but remote, and at the ſecond hand, it has moſt of their applications. Thus in caſe of *Diſeaſe*, they whoſe plenty enables them for the coſtlier methods of cure, is not their firſt reſort thither? Do not their Fees flie faſter than their Prayers? And are they not much haſtier to invite the Phyſician than the Divine? Nay, indeed the latter is ſcarce ever admitted, till the former have forſaken them; a ſhrewd indication, where their prime hopes are built. So again in any diſaſtrous event, the firſt Eſſay is whether Money will heal the Wound. He that is under the diſpleaſure of a Superiour, ſeeks to appeaſe by Preſents, or buys the *friendſhip* of a *Blaſtus*, *Acts* 12.20.

and prone to truſt in uncertain Riches more than in the living God, to mediate for him. He that is brought before a Tribunal, endeavours with the ſame golden Engine to draw off his Proſecutor, to bend and incline his Judge. He whoſe Wealth makes him purſued as a deſirable Prey, expects his ſafety even from that which is the original of his danger; and as if like a *Scorpion* it alone could cure its own ſting, tries whether a part will ſecure the whole. And in the mean time no attempt is made to call in God to their reſcue; as if he were an idle unconcern'd Spectator of humane affairs, or ſo inconſiderable an Ally, as not to be worth the care of engaging him on their ſide. Nay, even in their laſt and dreadfulleſt danger, many ſeem not to quit their dependence on their Wealth; ſome *Teſtamentary Charities* muſt then do wonders for them, and paſs for all thoſe *Fruits of Repentance*, which ſhould ſecure them from the *Wrath to come*. Even thoſe that have drunk the bloud of the Poor, ſuffered the moſt of it to incorporate into their Eſtates, think by diſgorging ſome ſmall part of it (which perhaps lies crude, not yet ſo digeſted) in a *Legacy*, to eaſe their conſciences: So adapting their Reſtitutions to their Rapines, only in this one reſpect, that thoſe as well as theſe are of another man's goods; they never commencing till death hath diſſeiſed them of all propriety, as if the *Iniquity of the Fathers* were in this ſence to be *viſited upon the Children*. Thus *their Wills* become their own Paſs-port, to convey them to *Abraham*'s boſom, and by thus *cajoling* the Poor at parting, they truſt to extinguiſh the clamours of all former oppreſſions, and in ſpight of *Solomon* will hope, that *Riches ſhall profit in the day of wrath*. It will not here be pertinent to inquire how many other objects of Truſt they have, which divert them from that one, to which the Apoſtle directs them. It may ſuffice in general to ſay, that none can be ſuppoſed indeed *to truſt on the living God*, but thoſe who by ſincere piety qualifie themſelves for his protection; according to which meaſure 'tis to be feared many even of the faireſt pretenders will be excluded.

Riches are too often a temptation to luxury and wantonneſs.

25. If now we proceed to the *laſt* part of the *Rich man's Duty*, the exerciſe of *Temperance*, we may without an *Augur* divine the return of that Inqueſt. For it having formerly appeared, that they turn that ſtream, which ſhould flow in Charity, to make the fuller current for their Luxury, 'tis viſible they are far from deſigning any ſelf-denial. But if that inference were not proof enough of it, they daily give us ocular demonſtrations: What ſtudious proviſions do they make for the fleſh *to flufil the luſts thereof*? *Rom.* 13. 14. Nature affords not Meat delicate enough for their Palats; it muſt be adulterated with the coſtly mixtures of Art, before it can become *Gentile* nouriſhment. And in this they are arrived to ſuch a niceneſs, that Cookery is become a very myſterious Trade, the Kitchin has almoſt as many Intricacies as the Schools. And the quantity of their Meat is not leſs extravagant than the kind; One that did but examine their *Bills of fare*, would think the Dogs appetite were the Epidemick Diſeaſe among them, if he did not conſider they had Eyes to be fed as well as Bellies. Nor will they be ſo Ununiform, as not to have their Drink bear a full proportion with their Meat; and 'twere well if it did no more, that their Drinking had but thoſe ſet hours of their Meals, that ſo there might be at leaſt ſome Intervals and Pauſes in their Debauches; whereas now many perſons allow themſelves no longer intermiſſions than may juſt qualifie them for a new Exceſs; recover their wits only ſo far, as may put them in capacity of loſing them again.

26. But beſides theſe, there is *another ſort of proviſion for the fleſh*, of which they are no leſs ſolicitous, and which many buy at very dear rates. The

embraces of a Wife are as nauſeous to them, as *Manna* to the *Iſraelites*. 'Tis Variety they hunt after; and ſo they might have the *Turk's Seraglio*, they would not ſtick to take his *Mahometaniſm* withall. Nay, if that were as agreeable to their Reaſon to believe, as to their inclinations to embrace, they would certainly reckon it a conſiderable part of the prize, as that which to the preſent poſſeſſion ſuperadds a liberal reverſion of thoſe brutiſh delights, and would think they had made a very commodious Bargain, to have ſo exchang'd the Chriſtian's preſent purity, and future Heaven.

Wealth oft abuſed to Pride and Exceſs in Apparel.

27. To all theſe Exceſſes, that of their *Apparel* does perfectly correſpond: So much coſt, ſo much buſineſs goes to it, that one may almoſt as cheaply and eaſily rig out a Ship, as *ſet out a Gentleman* in his complete Equipage. How many Artificers go there to the piecing him up? He that ſhould aſſign him one to each Limb, would much contract the number, which is indeed ſo great, that if it were computed 'twould be found it conſtituted moſt of the Trades in a Commonwealth. A ſtrange diſproportion, that the little world ſhould ſo much outvy the Greater; and a lively inſtance it is of the multiplying faculty of Vanity, that can improve Natures ſimple neceſſity of covering, to ſuch an exorbitant exceſs, and has nurſt up the firſt Fig-leaves to ſuch a luxuriant growth, that the *Hercinian Oaks*, which *Mela* tells ſuch wonders of, are but a kind of Pigmy-plant to them that thus over-ſpread the World, and from covering of Shame, are grown to ſhadow and darken Reaſon it ſelf, ſo creating a *Moral* nakedneſs, whilſt they hide a Natural.

Rich men are generally too profuſe and expenſive in their Sports and Recreations.

28. To all the reſt we may add, their *Sports* and *Recreations*, the expenſiveneſs whereof is no way inferior to all the former. *Gaming*, like a Quickſand, ſwallows up a man in a moment; and how many ſuch Wrecks have theſe latter Ages produced? *Hawks*, and *Hounds*, and *Horſes*, &c. are ſomewhat ſlower devourers, yet as they are managed by ſome, tend much to the ſame end: So that methinks ſuch men ſeem to make the ſame menace to their Eſtates, which *Goliah* did to *David*, 1 *Sam.* 17. 44. *I will give thee to the fowls of the Air, and to the beaſts of the field.* Such vaſt numbers of them they have, and thoſe kept with ſuch niceneſs and curioſity, as if they had a deſign to debauch the poor Animals, and infect them with their luxury. 'Tis now no news in the literal ſence to have the *Childrens bread given to Dogs*; and it may within a while be as little, to have not only their Children, but themſelves want it. For Prodigality is of the nature of the Viper, and eats out the bowels of that Wealth which gave it birth; and *Actæon's* fate was both Emblem and Story, *to be eaten up with his Dogs*.

A prudent overſight and moderate improvement of their Eſtates is a great advantage to them.

29. We have ſeen now how much their *Practice* ſwerves from their *Duty*: Let us next a little conſider, whether they might not be happier if they were regulated by it. And firſt, *a prudent overſight* of their *Eſtates* is ſure far from being ſuch an oppreſſing burden as ſome are willing to fancy it. For if it be moderate, and ſuch only I recommend, it is ſuppoſed to exclude all painful and diſquieting ſolicitudes, and then it becomes only of the nature of a Divertiſement, helps them off with ſome of thoſe ſpare hours, whoſe emptineſs becomes their Load, and which they would elſe be in pain, and probably at no ſmall coſt to diſpoſe of. And I ſee not why it ſhould not be full as pleaſant at the inſtant, to talk of their own affairs, as of other men's, (which yet are the uſual entertainment of thoſe that neglect their own;) to take up accounts at home, as Reckonings at the Tavern: And I am ſure 'tis much more ſo in the conſequences of it, as much as Peace is above Diſcord and Tumult, Plenty above Indigence and Neceſſity.

Contentedneſs with their Eſtates is the greateſt wealth and happineſs of this world.

30. Next for *Contentment*, univerſal conſent ſuperſedes the labour of proving that a happineſs, it being unanimouſly accorded to be the Elixir and Quinteſſence of all that pretends to that title; to be to all theſe outward things, as the Soul is to the Body, that which animates and inſpirits them, without which they are but dead, yea noiſom carcaſſes, preſſures inſtead of enjoyments. This is the true *Philoſophers ſtone*, that turns all it touches into Gold; the poor man is Rich with it, and the Richeſt poor without it. Whoever therefore deſires to improve his Eſtate, let him begin his culture or husbandry upon his mind, plant there this Tree of Life, the ſhade whereof will yield him a perpetual refreſhment, 'twill make him always as rich as he deſires to be; and he certainly knows not what he asks that demands more.

Liberality and Almſdeeds do rather increaſe than diminiſh an Eſtate.

31. The next Duty, that of *Liberality*, may perhaps be thought not to have ſo amiable an aſpect; but it is only by thoſe who look upon it through falſe Glaſſes: Men generally conſider it as a piece of ſpiritual rapine, an Engine framed by Divines to force open their Coffers, and plunder them without a War. But if they would but turn the right end of the *Perſpective*, 'twould then have a quite contrary appearance; they would diſcern that it is the means to multiply, not diminiſh their ſtore, a more profitable way of uſury than any the greedieſt Extortioner hath ever found out. '*Tis a lending to the Lord*, *Prov.* 19. 17. who ſurely is the moſt ſolvent Debtor any may can deal with, and one who never makes ſcanty retributions. This I am confident might be atteſted eventually true by all thoſe who have attempted to make the experiment. The only prejudice that can lie againſt their Teſtimony is the paucity of thoſe that have ſo attempted (and would to God men would conſpire to ſolve that objection) for were all charitable perſons ſummon'd to give in their accounts, I doubt not it would appear their bounty had enriched, not impoveriſhed them. I am ſure I have met with ſeveral remarkable inſtances of it, but never yet with one to the contrary; and therefore if either reaſon or precedent may have force, he that conſiders but rightly his own temporal Intereſt cannot but have appetite to this Duty, in reſpect of himſelf. And yet where there are many bowels, this is but a faint inducement compared with that which ariſes from the calamities of the perſons to be relieved. The wants of the Poor are loud and paſſionate Orators, ſuch as cannot miſs to work upon any, on whom covetouſneſs hath not firſt wrought the unhappy *Metamorphoſis*, of turning them into ſtone. And theſe having once conveyed into a man's mind a compaſſionate regret, himſelf groans under that preſſure, which he ſees cruſhing the other: And then what can be more pleaſant than by a ſeaſonable charity to eaſe both? None doubts of the Receivers delight, but ſure that is ſhort of the Givers, by how much the interior ſenſe is more ſubtle and acute than the exterior. Would God thoſe who make it their Trade to hunt after pleaſures, would try but this One piece of Epicuriſm, and then I doubt not, they would acknowledge that all meat is inſipid, compared with that, which they eat with the poor man's mouth, the moſt ſplendid apparel, ſordid and inglorious, in reſpect of that they wear upon his back; and all pleaſures and recreations joyleſs and uneaſie, balanced with thoſe tranſcendent delights which attend the exerciſe of Chriſtian liberality.

Rich men ought to watch againſt Pride as a very troubleſome and ungrateful vice.

32. Nor have they in the next place any reaſon to ſuſpect the Apoſtle treacherous to their preſent intereſt, when he ſeeks to deſpoil them of that either *Pride*, or confidence which their Riches are apt to create. For the former 'tis certain all haughty perſons may very properly interrogate

themſelves in that form, we find *Wiſd.* 5. 8. *What hath Pride profited us, or what good hath Riches with our vaunting brought us?* It would ſurely puzzle the moſt experienced man to define what there is in pride, that can afford any felicity. The utmoſt that can be pretended is, that it is a lively chearful thing to have good thoughts of ones ſelf; but he that can in earneſt make this plea for Pride, does in juſtice owe as fair an *Encomium* to *Bedlam*: For according to this meaſure that contains the happieſt people, there being thoſe that are the moſt highly rapt in the opinion of their own Excellencies. Yet ſure we ſhould judge him in good Election for the place, that ſhould look upon it with appetite. But admit this might indeed paſs for a pleaſure, yet it is the parent of a far greater uneaſineſs, and like a carcaſe breeds a worm that devours it ſelf. For he that looks on himſelf with ſuch a reverence, expects that all others ſhould do ſo too, and when he fails in that aim (as none ſo frequently does, as the proud) what diſquiets and impatiences is he under! Such as infinitely overwhelm all the pleaſures of his vain complacencies. A little diſrepect from *Mordecai* is able to evacuate all *Hamon's* proſperity. Such a Cheat and Impoſtor is Pride, that whilſt it pretends to exalt, it debaſes; whilſt it elevates a man above others, it really ſubjects him to them, puts him in their power to torment and cruciate, and whilſt it makes ſhew of advancing, 'tis but in the ſame manner that the Rack extends the ſtature by diſlocating the joints. And then I hope 'twill be no unfriendly office to perſwade men to keep themſelves from that engin of pain, or to recommend to them ſuch an humility of mind, as may preſerve them in that ſecurity and compoſedneſs, which is fundamentally neceſſary to all true happineſs.

'Tis more ſafe and happy to truſt in God than in any worldly Eſtate and Condition whatever.

33. The very ſame judgment is to be made of the other Branch of the Caution, the *not truſting in uncertain Riches, but in the living God*; which is moſt viſibly every man's preſent concernment. He that can entertain a doubt of it, let him but fall into the hands of ſome treacherous or but impotent perſon, that ſhall in ſome important affairs betray his truſt, or deceive his hopes, and then let him tell me whether it be not a man's immediate and moſt preſſing Intereſt, to build his confidences on the Rock, not on the Sand. Nothing but the amazing exigencies of a ſinking man can excuſe the folly of catching at Reeds; but he that ſhould deliberately elect ſuch Supporters would be thought as mad, as he is ſure to be miſerable. Yet this is but the faint and imperfect Emblem of him who reſts upon his Wealth: Whereas on the other ſide he that ſhelters himſelf under the ſhadow of the Almighty, is poſſeſt of a moſt inexpugnable Fortreſs. For how can he fail of ſecurity that has Omnipotency for his Guard, or be deluded in his truſts, that depends on Truth it ſelf? Let theſe ſo diſtant ſtates be compared, and then ſurely I not need to anticipate any man's judgment, but may leave him to pronounce on which ſide his Intereſt as well as Duty lies in this particular.

A great deal more pleaſure in Temperance and Purity than in the contrary vices.

34. Laſtly *Temperance* alſo puts in her claim to *Pleaſure*, which I preſume thoſe will be ſure to reſiſt, who place that wholly in the ſatisfaction of the ſenſual appetite. Yet I believe one might take even theſe men in ſuch a ſeaſon, when they ſhould be forced to give up their verdict for it. Come to the *Glutton* when he is labouring under the load of an overcharged ſtomach; to the *Drunkard* when his mornings qualm is revenging on him his laſt nights debauch; to the *luſtful* perſon, when the torment of his bones admoniſhes him of the ſins of his fleſh: And then ask them whether *Temperance* be not more pleaſant than its contrary. I can ſcarce think the Devil has any ſuch ſtout *Confeſſors*, but will then betray

his cauſe. But this vertue is in it ſelf too amiable to need any of theſe Foils to illuſtrate it; the pleaſure of ſubduing a Luſt, of denying an Appetite, is not only nobler, but greater than any is to be had in the moſt tranſporting moment of ſatisfying them. Every man will call him a Brute, that when an Enemy is in the Field loſes the opportunity of a glorious Victory, and expoſes himſelf to certain Captivity, rather than forſake his Liquor, or other ſordid pleaſure. And this is the juſt deciſion of the preſent caſe; Our Luſts are our mortalleſt Enemies, and every time they aſſault us, 'tis in our choice either by reſiſting them to gain a ſignal Conqueſt, or elſe by ſtooping to theſe deſpicable Lures they hold out to us, to be vanquiſhed by them. He that chuſes the laſt, if he have any ſhadow of pleaſure, 'tis only that of a *Beaſt*, (like a Horſe, who though he hath indeed the ſatisfaction of receiving Meat, yet he alſo takes the Bridle, yea the Whip too from the ſame hand.) 'Tis the former only that is the pleaſure of a *man*, which I ſuppoſe ſufficient to evince to which the difference belongs. For ſure none can think God hath been ſo unkind to his own Image in humane nature, as in the diſpenſation of felicity to aſſign the larger ſhare to the *Brutes*. And therefore in this particular as well as the reſt we may conclude, That he is not only the moſt pious but the moſt happy perſon, that makes the right uſe of his Wealth.

SECT. VI.

Of the Third Advantage, that of Time.

The preciouſneſs of Time beſt learnt by the eſtimate dying perſons put upon it.

1. LET us now proceed to the Third Advantage, that of *Time*: Which, though men do often ſo induſtriouſly waſte, as if it were rather a burthen than an advantage, yet the differing eſtimates they make of it, when it is near expiring, the paſſionate *Death-bed* wiſhes of a few days reprieve, witneſs that it has a real value. For were it an empty uſeleſs thing, it would not then begin to appear conſiderable, when all other vanities grow in contempt with us. The unhappineſs of it is, that men learn to prize it, as they do moſt other good things, rather by the want than the enjoying, by the skill of trading with the loſs of the Talent, which ſhould maintain the Traffick, and then only come to account it a treaſure, when they can no longer diſpoſe it to any benefit; and that diſpoſing alone is it that can render it truly valuable. It is therefore a moſt neceſſary providence to learn this art of improvement, this piece of ſpiritual husbandry, without which a man's ſelf becomes that accurſed ſoil the Apoſtle mentions, *Heb.* 6. 8. *Whoſe end is to be burned.* Let us therefore a-while examine what are thoſe Imployments of our Time, which may render it moſt fertile to our preſent comfort, and future account.

The happineſs of Eternity depends on the well-husbanding of Time here.

2. Every man ſays (though perhaps few conſider) that *our time here is but a Prologue to Eternity* elſewhere, and that the condition of that Eternity, whether happy or miſerable, depends upon the well husbanding of this Time. That therefore and that only can be the right managery of it, which tends to make our future Eſtate as happy, as it is ſure to be laſting. To this purpoſe God hath chalked us out ſome great lines of Duty, from whence ſo many leſſer do ariſe, as will, if we will permit them, twiſt and wind themſelves with every hour of our lives. And though theſe Duties are in the kind of them obligatory to all conditions of men, yet frequenter acts of them are expected from thoſe, whoſe Qualities and Fortunes give them more vacancy from ſecular toils.

3. For certainly it is not to be fanſied, that God who has put an active Principle into our nature ſhould induſtriouſly provide for the ſuppreſſing its operations in any, devote ſuch a Select number of men, as an *Hecatomb* to be offered up to *Idleneſs*. And yet much leſs can it be thought, that he ſhould ſo promote that Iniquity, which he profeſſes to hate, as to deſign them to the purſuits of that, *Manumit* them from labour, to leave them freer for vice. And if neither of theſe can be ſuppoſed, if their leiſure were not indulged them either that they might do nothing, or do ill, there remains only a third end imaginable, and that is the doing good; as for the Sports and Paſtimes, the beſt of them come ſo near to Idleneſs, and the worſt of them to Vice, that as the one is not to be allowed any, ſo the other no conſiderable part of their time. Now becauſe *none is good but one, that is God*, *Mark* 10. 18. we can take our meaſures of good actions only from his preſcription; and ſo thoſe which he has commended as ſuch to Mankind in general, point out to this particular rank of men the nature of their Exerciſes, as their eſpecial Vacancy and Leiſure does the higher degrees of them.

God hath allowed Gentlemen this Talent of Time, not to be idle or abuſe it; but to improve and do good in.

4. And firſt thoſe of *Piety* towards God juſtly challenge a great ſhare of their *Time*. For whereas God may ſeem to have limited and confined the poor man's zeal, by that Rule of *preferring mercy* to themſelves *before ſacrifice* to him; he does by exempting the rich from thoſe neceſſities tacitly require their *devotion* to ſwell up to ſome proportion with his bounty to them, who being freed from thoſe weights wherewith others are clogged and incumbred, even nature it ſelf ſuggeſts the expectation of their ſoaring higher. He has put them at a diſtance from the meaner cares and ſolicitudes of life, as if he were jealous thoſe might prove his rivals, and keep them from growing into a cloſer intimacy with himſelf. And ſhall this deſign of his love be defeated? And when he has thus ſecured himſelf from one ſort of Competitor, ſhall more and baſer be ſought out, every the triflingeſt and vileſt Entertainment be courted to come and ſupplant him? This were indeed to anſwer that odious character of the *Adultereſs*, *Ezek.* 16. 34. which was not *ſolicited*, but *did ſolicit*. And thoſe that can make ſuch unworthy and provoking returns to ſo endearing a kindneſs, evince themſelves deſtitute not only of Grace, but of all degrees of common good Nature. For when he ſo projects for their familiarity and converſe, what can be more inhumane and ingrate, than thus ſcornfully to decline it? Yet under this charge all thoſe will certainly fall, who do not employ (nay devote) every day ſome conſiderable part of this their vacant time to the keeping up their intercourſe with God, by Reading, Prayer and Meditation.

The duties of Piety ought, in the firſt place, to challenge a ſhare of Gentlemen's Time and Leiſure:

5. In the next place, *Themſelves* put in for a part. But here I mean not thoſe brutiſh ſenſual ſelves, which have in many (like *Pharaoh*'s lean kine) devoured the nobler and more excellent; but it is the more divine and ſublimated part of them, on which their time is to be laid out. And here they can never want buſineſs, that being in ſeveral reſpects a very proper object of their diligence. For firſt, their *Underſtandings*, how clear and vigorous ſoever, attain not their height at once, are not like *Adam* created in a ſtate of maturity and perfection, but like his degraded poſterity, make gradual motions towards it, advance by ſeveral ſteps and degrees of proficiency; nor can we in this life aſcend to ſuch a *Non ultra* as excludes a poſſibility of growth. So that no advantage of Education can ſuperſede the uſe of After-induſtry, that being ſtill able to make farther improvements, bring in new acceſſions to their Knowledge. And

The duties they owe toward themſelves put in for another ſhare of their Time: And firſt, the improving of their minds and underſtandings:

this is ſo inviting an entertainment, as may very reaſonably expect their companies ſome hours of the day in their Studies.

The right ordering and governing of their Wills and Affections is another duty they owe to themſelves.

6. But though this be a conſiderable, yet is it not the weightieſt part of that care they owe themſelves. For as the Soul conſidered in its *Intellect*, may thus become their Pupil, ſo in its *Morals* it has often need to be their Patient. For though in its Original Conſtitution it was perfectly pure and healthy, yet by inhabiting in this peſthouſe the Fleſh, it hath contracted much of its contagion; and how much the more delicate and refined its compoſition is, ſo much the more mortal are the diſeaſes to which it is ſubject. It will therefore require a cloſe and wary attendance. A Phyſician that has a nice and tender Patient, muſt be very aſſiduous in his care, obſervant of all ſymptoms, watchful againſt all accidents. And ſo certainly ſhould men be here; they ſhould make daily obſervations how their ghoſtly ſtrength increaſes or decays, what Humour moſt predominates, whether Choler boil up into rage, Phlegm freez into ſloth; whether the Sanguineſs of their temper make them luſtful, or the melancholy revengeful, and accordingly apply their ſpiritual Purgatives, the Baths or the *Palæſtra*, preſcribe rules of Diet and Exerciſe. And doubtleſs whoever makes theſe daily ſtrict inſpections into himſelf, will by the ineſtimable benefit he receives from it, be taught how great a bleſſing his Time is, and how much a greater to have grace thus to employ it.

The duty they owe their neighbour requires another ſhare of their Time.

7. But though a *Man's ſelf* be a *Province* wide enough to take up a good part of this time, yet muſt he not ſo ingroſs it, as to defraud his *Neighbour*, who has alſo a right to ſhare in it. God having made man after his own Image, has (as part of that) ſtamped upon him the Bounty and Communicativeneſs of his nature: And therefore when we live wholly to our ſelves, we raſe and deface that Impreſs. And when 'tis remembred that the hainouſneſs even of *Murder* is by God pronounced to ariſe from the *violation of his Image*, *Gen.* 9. 6. parity of reaſon muſt conclude this no light guilt. Nor is it only our Goods we are to impart (for that were a very partial Tranſcript of that Bounty we are to imitate, which gives us ſo much beſides) but in general whatever other Ability we have by which our Neighbour may receive advantage: And ſo a man has as many employments of his time, as he either finds or can make opportunities of doing good to others. I ſay make; for ſure ſince God hath conſtituted Love to our Neighbour one of the fundamental laws to Mankind, we are not to look upon it only as an accidental or caſualty, but as a main and deliberate buſineſs of our lives; not refer it wholly to chance whether ever we ſhall do an act of this kind or no; but induſtriouſly ſeek out and improve occaſions. Thus we find the Liberality of our Bleſſed Lord repreſented to us in the *parable of the great Supper*, *Luke* 14. 6. where there was not only liberal proviſions made for ſuch as would come in, but importunity uſed to draw them, particular invitations made to the *poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind*; and when that brought not in gueſts enough, the *High-ways and Hedges* were to be ranſacked, and a general Preſs, as it were, made of men, to receive not the Earneſt-penny of Death, (which is uſually the ſignification of our Preſs-money) but the Antepaſt of Eternal life. O that all thoſe who pretend to greatneſs of mind, would copy out this Munificence, that they would prevent men's deſires and invite them to come and be obliged by them. For want of this, many occaſions of doing benefits are loſt; the modeſty of ſome, perhaps the pride of others, averts them from requeſting thoſe aſſiſtances they moſt need. It were therefore the nobleſt Study a *Gentleman* could entertain himſelf

with, to ſearch the various Wants of thoſe within his ſphere. But then he muſt be ſure to do it with a candid deſign, the more opportunely to apply himſelf to their aid: He muſt not treacherouſly inquire who wants knowledge to deride, but inſtruct them; not hunt out a debauched perſon, to make him his Companion, but his Convert; not find out quarrels to foment, but compoſe them; in a word, not pry into other men's concernments, like a buſie body, but a Friend; not to comply with his own curioſity, but their need. And now he that pays a juſt Tribute of his Time to theſe three grand Duties, will (when the other dues to Nature, temporal Affairs, and neceſſary Civilities are deducted) not have much to ſacrifice either to Idleneſs or Vice, but will rather think he wants Time than Buſineſs.

But the Gentlemen of this Age find little Time for Piety and Devotion;

8. But alas, the full leiſure they generally find for the direct contrary employments, witneſſes too irrefragably that they are not thus taken up. It is true indeed, we find God often in their Mouths, but it is rather in Oaths, than Prayers; as if they meant their profanations ſhould be the only teſtimony that they believed a Deity. How many are their ſuch profeſt Votaries to *Bacchus*, that their Knees are reſerved only for him, never to be bent but in drinking of Healths; that ſeem to have enacted to themſelves the profaner part of *Darius*'s Law, *Dan.* 6. 7. that of *asking no Petition of God*, only herein out-vying him, that theirs is for indefinite, not limited time; who reckon ſaying of Prayers among thoſe Pedantick tasks of their childhood, which expire with the Rod and *Ferula*, and can never think fit to debaſe their more Manly ſtate to it, unleſs perhaps a reſtleſs night may force them to call it in to ſupply the place of a more uſual and pleaſing *Anodyne*. Whether this be not the pitch of many *Gentlemen*'s Devotion, I appeal to any that obſerves their Practice.

and as little for ſerious and profitable ſtudies.

9. Nor have they much more to do in the Library, than the Oratory, unleſs it be ſtored with *Romances*, any deeper ſort of reading is as formidable to them, as the Mines or Galleys; nor do they without wonder look at thoſe who can voluntarily ſet themſelves to tug at thoſe Oars. But Divinity is beyond all others under prejudice with them, decried not only as a crabbed, but *ungentile* ſtudy; ſo that upon pain of Reproach, none are to know more of it, than may juſt qualifie them to deride it; or read the Bible to any other purpoſe, than to enable them to blaſpheme God in his own ſtile. If theſe men may be ſaid at all to converſe with God, it is in the ſame manner that the Phariſees did with our Saviour, with the inſidious deſign of *entangling him in his talk*, *Matth.* 22. And ſure the more time is thus ſpent, the worſe.

The moſt of their Time is ſpent in Sloth and Luxury;

10. Proportionably to this they acquit themſelves of the *other* parts of this Duty; that *Time* which they ſhould beſtow either in preventing or curing their ſpiritual Maladies, they lay out wholly in contracting or increaſing them. They have made a moſt ſtrict league with the Fleſh, and like faithful Confederates they omit no endeavour to ſtrengthen its Party, to ſupply it with freſh forces, the expence of the *whole day* is managed wholly in order to that end. Thus that they may be ſure to keep their Luſt high and vigorous, they give it a nouriſhing breakfaſt of Sloth in the morning, a full meal of gluttony at noon, beſides multitudes of collations in obſcene Diſcourſe and Fancies, all the day: And with theſe Auxiliaries, it need not doubt to maintain the Field againſt poor macerated Chaſtity. So again, leſt Sobriety ſhould happen to ſurprize them, and gain but the honour of one Day, how vigilant are they to give it the firſt aſſault? Scarce a day that they draw not up in *Battalia* againſt it, and ſeldom miſs giving it a total

Rout; and if ſleep like a Miſt befriend it to ſteal upon them in the morning again, yet that little ſucceſs is but a preparation to a more ſignal Defeat in the afternoon, which is with many, a time allotted wholly to theſe skirmiſhes; perhaps the chaſe followed all night, nay, purſued ſo far by ſome, till an habitual Sottiſhneſs ſave them the labour of theſe Quotidian Combates. Nor is their Pride ſo affronted, as to be forgot in the diſtribution of their Time, a good ſcantling of it is cut out to its uſe; ſome in contriving and deſigning their Cloaths, and ſome in putting them on; ſome in admiring themſelves, and ſome in projecting to be admired by others; ſome in hearing flatteries, and more in reflecting and ruminating upon them.

and what they can ſpare from their debauchery, is uſually ſpent in vain ſports and paſtimes.

11. As for thoſe broken parcels of *Time*, which are not thus devoted to theſe or ſome other ſet and ſolemn Senſualities, they are gleaned up by Sports and unſignificant paſtimes: Nay, even ſome who abſtain from the former, do yet ſo wholly abandon themſelves to the latter, that their lives become utterly unprofitable. Under this number I have no intention to include all who allow themſelves Recreations; I know ſome divertiſement is ſo neceſſary both to the Body and Mind of a man, that if it keep within moderate bounds, it is but a juſt debt to himſelf, and cannot fall under any ill character: But that which is reprehenſible in this matter, is the exceſs and inordinacy of it, the making that a buſineſs, which ſhould be but a diverſion. And this we ſee too uſual with many, who abſurdly ſtretch this privilege of their *Gentility*, even till it break; purſue their ſports of Hawking and Hunting, *&c.* ſo vehemently and aſſiduouſly, that ere they are aware, they adopt theſe their Callings; never conſidering that a Faulconer or Huntſman is indeed as mean a Vocation, as thoſe they moſt deſpiſe. But whatever other paſtimes of this nature any man ſuffers to uſurp his time, he does in it extremely reproach himſelf, tacitly confeſſes, that he is unfit for generous and manly imployments, and calls himſelf Child, while he thus trifles and plays away his days.

Gaming, as now uſed, is both a great ſin and expence of Time.

12. I know not whether I may rank the great and *deep Gameſters* in this File: For though the nature of their imployment belong to it, yet there are ſuch conſiderable ruinous effects of it, as ſeem to place it in the number of more ſerious Ills. And indeed, though Cuſtom hath called it Play, yet the many anxious fears and uneaſie Commotions which uſually attend it, evince the great impropriety of the Title, and would more reaſonably have given it a name of the direct contrary importance. But as feigned names are commonly an art of concealing perſons, ſo this Trade aſſumes the ſtile of Divertiſement, indeed to diſguiſe its true original which undoubtedly is Covetouſneſs. For, what imaginable cauſe can there be aſſigned, beſides the deſire of Winning, that ſhould make men venture what they are ſo unwilling to loſe? It is certain, he that plays for a Piece, has as much of the divertive part, as he that ſtakes a thouſand: And were that all were deſigned, men need not, and certainly would not ſo profuſely overbuy what offers it ſelf at ſo much a cheaper rate. I know this is a motive men think too ſordid to own, but would God they would once learn (in this better ſence) to revere themſelves as well as others, and deſpiſe to be prevailed on by what they are aſhamed to avow. But the event ordinarily ſpeaks it as great a Folly as Meanneſs, of which there are too many ſad inſtances in the ſhipwrackt Fortunes of theſe Adventurers. And indeed there is nothing wonderful in it, but that men will be ſo mad as to run the hazard. For that being ſuppoſed, it is not at all ſtrange to ſee them ſink under it. For a man has here to deal not with Chance alone (which yet

were but a tickliſh bottom to imbark in (but with ſuch combinations of Deceit, that even good Fortune it ſelf will not ſecure him: So that he that has not learnt to Plow with the ſame Heifer, is like to make but ſad Husbandry of it. And even thoſe that have, if they happen to get ſome few good Crops, yet they quite wear out the Soil with them, forfeit that Reputation with all conſidering men, which ſhould let them into farther opportunities, and leave themſelves to live not ſo much upon their own Wits, as other men's Follies. It is true indeed, that hath in theſe latter days proved a pretty large *Common* to graze on, and ſome have ſeemed to thrive well upon it; but Generally ſuch Cattle meet at laſt with a pinching Winter, which leaves them as bare and meagre, as ever. In ſhort, Cheating has uſually a reflexed efficacy, and deceives none more than thoſe that uſe it: Yet ſuch a ſtroke hath it now got in Gaming, that in moſt Companies it leaves men only this miſerable choice, Whether they will be active or paſſive in it. Which methinks ſhould be enough to awaken men, as immoderate Tyrannies uſe to do, to vindicate their Liberties, and reduce Gaming from this exorbitancy to its Primitive uſe, make it ceaſe to be a Trade, and become a Recreation: And that too bounded within ſuch juſt limits, that it may not incroach on thoſe hours which ſhould be deſtined to greater concernments. But as it is between this and the reſt, either Impertinencies or Vices, all their time is ſo pre-ingaged and foreſtalled, that their moſt important intereſt is left forlorn and neglected; they have as little Leiſure as Will to conſider the poor Soul, or ſcarce to remember that they carry any ſuch trifle about them.

A great deal of Time is ſpent in idle and impertinent Viſits, or in enſnaring the innocence of Youth in both Sexes.

13. And now they that thus forget God and themſelves, no wonder if they afford little conſideration to their brethren. They will not be guilty of ſuch an *Indecorum*, or deny the Body of ſin its exact ſymmetry, by making this part unproportionable to the reſt: And therefore they either allow no part of *their Time to others*, or do it to ſuch inverted perverſe purpoſes, as makes the payment worſe than robbery. Thus many beſtow *Viſits* on others, not out of any purpoſe of kindneſs, but either to trifle away their own time, or to make obſervations, what they can ſpy ridiculous to entertain their laughter. A myſtery the *London* viſitants are generally well read in, who have put this buſineſs long ſince into a ſettled courſe; ſo that the diſcoveries of one Viſit ſets them in a ſtock of defaming, backbiting diſcourſe for the next, and ſo ſucceſſively *ad infinitum*. So again, many who call themſelves *Gentlemen*, much to the reproach of that title, if they can find out a *young Heir* of much wealth and little prudence, how officious, how diligent are they in attending him; Watching him as gladly as a Vulture does the fall of a Carcaſe, till they find an advantage to rook him at Play, entangle him in Suretiſhip, or perhaps betray him to ſome mean and unequal Match. So if they hear but of a *beautiful Woman*, what contrivances, what deſigns do they lay, firſt to ſee, and then to corrupt her; make it a buſineſs to themſelves, as well as a trade to their Agents and Factors, to ſpring ſuch Game? And upon ſuch occaſions as theſe can liberally ſacrifice their *Time*, of which when any Charitable office would borrow from them but ſome few minutes, they are then ſuch buſie perſons, they can by no means afford it. A *Nabal's* blunt and *churliſh refuſal*, or at beſt a *Felix* put off to *a convenient ſeaſon*, are the uſual returns to ſuch motions. But to anticipate the Propoſal, to go in queſt of ſuch Opportunities, looks with them like a piece of *Knight-errantry*, has ſo little of their practice, that it ſcarce eſcapes their ſcorn.

The account that we muſt give of this loſt and miſ-ſpent Time will be ſad and heavy.

14. And now what a heavy Bill of Indictment is like one day to be brought in againſt them, when God, their Souls, and their Neighbours ſhall all join in their Charge! O that they would ſeaſonably conſider how ſadly obnoxious they are to it; and that condemnation which will inevitably follow it; that ſo they may according to Chriſt's counſel, *Matth.* 5. 25. *agree with theſe adverſaries while they are in the way*, and by yielding to each of them for the future a juſt portion of their *Time*, compound the buſineſs, ſtop the Proceſs againſt them. That they would remember, that of all their prodigalities, this of their time is the moſt deſperate, ſuch as is moſt impoſſible to redeem, and yet that wherein they are of all others the deepliest concerned. And this they would certainly be convinced of, if their Aiery fancies could but ſo condenſe into Earth as to bring them into any acquaintance with their Beds of duſt, give them ſome foretaſte of their Dying terrors: For let them but ſadly think what they would then give for ſome few of thoſe Days they now ſtudy to fling away, and they cannot chuſe but infer the neceſſity of being better Husbands. We read in Scriptures of the Demoniacks *dwelling among the Tombs*: But the Devil has ſure changed that habitation; for thoſe whom he now poſſeſſes he permits not to converſe at all there, as knowing it is the propereſt preparative to his diſpoſſeſſion. And doubtleſs it would be the moſt powerful *Exorciſm*, as of all others, ſo of this Evil ſpirit (this filching Devil, that thus ſteals from men their precious hours) often to deſcend into the Vault or *Charnel-houſe*, and by ſerious conſideration how ſhort their *Time* is, to inforce upon themſelves a care of redeeming it.

Much more pleaſure in ſpending our Time in the ſervice of God than in the ſervice of Sin and Vice.

15. Nor need they fear that to *redeem their Time*, they muſt ſell their Pleaſures, give up themſelves to a joyleſs ſtate of life. For though it is true they muſt reſign their counterfeit they ſhall have real Delights in exchange; they muſt part with their Glaſs, but ſhall have Gold inſtead of it. And as none but a rude *Indian* will repine at that bargain in the Literal, ſo none but a ruder Chriſtian can diſlike it in the Moral ſence. For in the firſt place, he that imploys his *time* in converſing with God, is not only more honourably and more profitably, but alſo more pleaſantly buſied than he can poſſibly be any other way. We all ſay, *That God is the Center of felicity*: But he gives himſelf the lye, that does not withall confeſs, that the cloſer acquaintance we have with him, the nearer approach we make to happineſs. For whoever believed the Son to be the Fountain of heat, and yet feared to freez by drawing near its Rays? Indeed none but the downright Atheiſt can with any tolerable Logick, diſpute the pleaſantneſs of this Duty. For can any whoſe Faith has ſet up a God, ſuffer their fancies to dreſs him like a Fiend? Put on him ſuch unlovely ſhapes, as may beget averſion, deter them from approaching to him? Can they call him a Deity, to whom they will not attribute ſo much as they will to every ingenuous man, the honour of being good Company? This is to be not only profane but abſurd. And if there be any of ſo ſhort Diſcourſe, I ſuppoſe him uncapable of conviction by Argument: The common Proverb hath aſſigned him his Teacher, *viz. Experience*. Let him by frequent, yet reverent Addreſſes to God, grow into ſome familiarity with him, bring himſelf within diſtance of receiving his refreſhing Influences, and then he will diſcover how very unkind he hath been to himſelf in thus long holding off. In humane Converſations we uſe not to find the guſt and reliſh of them, till we arrive to ſome degree of Freedom: They that converſe as ſtrangers, are under conſtraints and uneaſineſs.

And certainly the main cauſe of that diſguſt men have to this Spiritual entercourſe, is their unaccuſtomedneſs to it. They addreſs to God perfectly as ſtrangers, now and then pay him a ſlight Viſit, as it were by way of formality and compliment; and then no wonder if it be neither ſatisfactory to God nor themſelves. But then 'tis ſure great injuſtice to defame that as unpleaſant, which becomes ſo only by their own ill managery; to ſay there is no water in the well, only becauſe they neglect to provide a Bucket for the drawing of it up.

The improvement of the underſtanding in knowledge and learning, affords a great deal of pleaſure.

16. In the next place 'tis ſure, their *Souls* mean them no malice in exacting part of their *Time*. For firſt, what they beſtow in improving and exalting their *Underſtandings*, does not only bring them in advantages in the end, but affords them alſo very fair accommodations by the way. Learning yields ſuch variety of agreeable entertainments, that like the *Manna in the Wilderneſs*, it adapts it ſelf to every man's taſte, he that likes not one ſort may fit himſelf with another; and ſure he muſt have a ſtrangely vitiated palate, to whom none of them will reliſh. I can ſcarce think Nature has produced any thing ſo diſtemper'd; but men take up general and implicit prejudices, and will look on Books in no other notion but as Taskmaſters, whereas if they would but conſider them as Companions, they could not miſs of one kind or other, to find a pleaſant converſation among them.

The great advantage of maſtering and governing our Paſſions and Appetites.

17. As for that portion of their *Time* which is ſpent in attendance on the yet more ſpiritual part of them, 'tis rather a gift than a robbery, to help them to ſuch a way of expence. Ingenuous men think it a prize when they meet an opportunity to reſcue from the ſullage of time any thing that carries the ſtamp of ancient worth and Nobility. But this is a piece of the greateſt Antiquity, of the nobleſt, yea divineſt Impreſs. How can men's hours be better laid out, then in reſtoring it to its primitive luſtre, in wiping off that ſoil wherewith the ſteam of boiling paſſions hath obſcured it, and by diſburdening it of thoſe loads of noxious humours under which it labours, like good Phyſicians, recover it from a languiſhing, infirm, to a vigorous athletick habit? And ſure the ſatisfaction of this muſt far exceed all other entertainments. Indeed that which is uſually taken up inſtead of it, can with no juſtice pretend to any tolerable complacency. No man envies his felicity, but contemns his ſordid and abject ſpirit, that picks out the baſeſt and unworthieſt company: And ſhall it here paſs for pleaſure to conſort only with the Plebeian part of himſelf, thoſe ſenſual Appetites, which are the Common people of this Little world, to ſpend all his time in Treating and Careſſing of theſe, and in the interim let the Soul, which is of ſo noble an extraction, ſo excellent endowments, ſtand by neglected, nay be trodden to death in the croud of this vulgar rabble? Certainly this is a Tragedy, that no man could ſee upon the Stage without indignation: Yet God knows, this is it men daily act over with applauſe to themſelves. Would God they would once ſhift the Scene, and let the oppreſt Soul have its ſeaſon of triumphing: Doubtleſs they would find it more pleaſant to ſhare in its Conqueſts than in its ruine. We read indeed of ſome Nations that have by the *Rites* of a barbarous Religion been forced to make *Humane ſacrifices*: Yet we find not that they had ſo ſlaughtered Humanity it ſelf, as to make it matter of delight. And has our Civility ſo far out-done their Barbariſm, that it ſhall be pleaſure to do that in ſpight of our Religion, which they did in obedience to theirs? To butcher the Man within us, and leave nothing but our outward Form and inward Guilt to difference us from Beaſts? He that

diſclaims this, muſt neceſſarily confeſs the pleaſure lies on the other ſide, in reſcuing the Spirit from the uſurpations, yea tyranny of the Fleſh; and conſequently that the Time he thus beſtows is not loſt, but improved to his own greateſt preſent, as well as future advantages.

The like advantage may be expected in that Time which is laid out for the good and benefit of others.

18. The like may (in the laſt place) be ſaid of that part of it which is laid out to the benefit of others, which is that which brings us to taſte the moſt delicious of humane delights: The pleaſure of obliging being of all thoſe the moſt raviſhing and tranſporting. And for this we need not the verdict of Chriſtianity: The Philoſopher atteſts it as well as the Divine. Nay it is ſo received a truth, that ſcarce any man will avow ſo much ill nature as to reſiſt it in diſcourſe, how much ſoever his practice diſowns it. Indeed this is a pleaſure of ſo exalted, ſo quinteſſential a kind, that what *Herod*'s Auditors ſaid in flattery of his Oration, we may ſay in truth of this: 'Tis the delight rather of *a God than a man*. That Soveraign Being, though he were eternally happy in himſelf, yet as if he had wanted of his complete felicity, whilſt he enjoyed it alone, was pleaſed rather to create, than want objects of his goodneſs. And a pleaſure to which God himſelf has given ſuch an atteſtation, as to make a World in order to it, ſure cannot, without the moſt impious contradiction of his choice, be deſpiſed by man. And certainly 'tis none of the leaſt of thoſe benefits he hath vouchſafed our nature, that he hath given us a capacity of it, by affording us thoſe powers by which we may advantage and oblige one another; ſo pointing us out a courſe, whereby we may not only innocently, but ſucceſsfully entertain *Lucifer*'s deſign, of being *like the moſt High*. It really makes Men what the Heathens vainly fanſied their *Heroes* even *Demi Gods*. O that thoſe, who think it Noble to be aſpiring, would thus verifie the opinion, by terminating all their wiſhes and endeavours in this one Generous Ambition! And then 'tis ſure they would not need to be told the happineſs of this ſo Deifying an employment.

SECT. VII.

Of the Fourth Advantage, that of his Authority.

The Authority which a Gentleman hath over his Relations and Dependents is of great advantage to him, for to impreſs Virtue in them.

1. IN the Fourth place we are to conſider the *Gentleman*'s advantage, in reſpect of his *Authority* over thoſe that relate to, or depend on him. And this if righly managed, is of excellent uſe, though as capable of being perverted as any of the former. He who has ſecular ties upon men, may often, by thoſe cords which bind their worldly intereſt, draw them to a conſideration of their ſpiritual. A *Tenant* who thinks his livelihood concerned in the good Will of his Landlord, a Penſioner whoſe ſubſiſtence reſts upon the bounty of his Patron, will ſtrive to model themſelves to ſuch a form, as may beſt ſuit the inclinations of the perſon they deſire to endear: They are uſually Wax to him, that are Flint to others. But then, as variety of Seals make differing Impreſſions, ſo this flexibleneſs of theirs may be either abuſed to ill, or improved to good; this Wax may receive the Image of a Beaſt or an Angel. It is therefore the duty of thoſe who are poſſeſt of this advantage, to uſe it to the impreſſing not of Vice, but Vertue; to contrive how they may moſt effectually diſcountenance the one, and encourage the other. And this they may doubtleſs have frequent opportunities of, towards either of thoſe relations forementioned.

2. But to none ſo often as to their *Domeſticks* and Menial Servants. Theſe are always ſo much in their road, that they ſeem to be marked out by God as their moſt peculiar Province. Every Maſter has ſo much of the Prophet, that he is *ſet as a Watchman, Ezek.* 3. 17. over his Family, and ought as jealouſly to obſerve the approach of any Vice towards it, as a Centinel does that of an Enemy. 'Tis a very pernicious error for men to think themſelves no other ways concerned in their Servants, than they are in their Horſes, or Oxen, to look upon them only as another ſpecies of Working-cattel, and ſo they do their buſineſs, care not how arrant Brutes they be. Whereas they ſhould remember, that they with themſelves are Common-ſervants to the one Great Maſter, and that the ſubordination of the one to the other is but the wiſe *Oeconomy* of their Lord, who has (as in great Families we ſee it uſual) conſtituted the one as Stewards or Supervisors, to regulate the reſt: And then 'twill appear a piece of enormous unfaithfulneſs to neglect this charge. To avoid which guilt, it will concern *Gentlemen* to have a ſedulous care over thoſe that are thus intruſted to them, to make ſtrict inſpection, into the manners of their ſervants, and accordingly to apply inſtructions, and admonitions, reproofs, or incouragements. And that they may not tranſcribe *Pharaoh's Tyranny, of exacting Brick without Straw,* require the ſuperſtructure of Chriſtian lives, where there wants the neceſſary foundation of Chriſtian knowledge, they muſt provide that none under their charge be deſtitute of the means of laying that ground-work, of knowing ſo much of Religion as may bring them into an acquaintance with their duty. But to give life to all theſe endeavours, 'tis indiſpenſably neceſſary for them to avow ſuch a Love to piety and vertue, and ſuch a Deteſtation of the contrary that their ſervants may ſee, that there is but one way of approving themſelves both to their earthly and heavenly Maſter.

Specially that which he hath in his Family, and over his Servants and Domeſticks.

3. If it be here Objected, That it is but a counterfeit vertue, which derives it ſelf from the care of pleaſing men, and ſo that this is, but to teach them to convert profaneneſs to hypocriſie: I muſt yield ſo far as to confeſs, that where that continues the final motive, it will never avail any man. But as God often uſes temporal and outward occurences, to produce inward and ſpiritual effects, ſo it may here happen, that thoſe whoſe firſt approaches to Goodneſs were mercenary, and out of compliance to others, may by coming within view of it diſcern it ſo amiable, that they may after love it for it ſelf. And indeed conſidering the rude ignorance uſual among the vulgar, 'tis ſcarce imaginable they ſhould imbrace it upon the bare ſtrength of ſpeculation, and therefore muſt be allowed ſecular invitations, as baits to allure them. As for thoſe that never advance higher than the meer *Form of Godlineſs,* what weight ſoever it may add to their own doom, yet perhaps that may juſtly be accounted leſs miſchievous to the world, than the contrary extreme; Hypocriſie being a ſin that cannot well ſet up for *Proſelytes,* becauſe it never owns it ſelf of a diſtinct party from true Piety. And 'tis not impoſſible, that the example of a feigned Chriſtian may teach others to ſurmount their copy, and be that in ſincerity, which he is but in appearance: Whereas open Vice pretends to no ſuch poſſibility, breaths nothing but Contagion, and like a Peſt infects Communities. We have therefore reaſon to conclude, that if this care were generally taken, 'twere a ſervice not only to God, but the Commonwealth, which has not more unprofitable, nay noxious burdens lying on her from any rank of men, than from lewd and idle Servants; who uſing their places only as a ſhelter for their ſloth and licentiouſneſs, when that

The profeſſion of Virtue, which may be counterfeit at firſt, may be ſerious afterwards.

Gourd withers, know not whither to retire, but uſually either live Beggars, or die Thieves: Whereas if *Gentlemens families* were ſo ordered, as to become Seminaries of Induſtry and Sobriety, the number of them is ſo great, that they might be able to ſend out many Colonies of uſeful and civil perſons.

Gentlemen have an advantage of improving their friendſhip to the moſt noble ends of Religion and Morality;

4. There is alſo another ſort of *Relative*, viz. *a Friend*: Over whom though they have not that Authority, which ſprings from this ſervile ſtock of hopes and fears, yet they have one of a much more noble deſcent, and more vigorous efficacy. Friendſhip has a key to the heart, which it may uſe not only to let it ſelf into its ſecrets, but alſo to introduce its own conceptions, ſentiments, and inclinations; it ſo mixes with the mind, that it may inſenſibly convey into it any *Idea*. Now to uſe this intimacy to the bringing in any thing baſe and unworthy, is the vileſt treachery, ſuch as is but imperfectly repreſented by the treaſon of him, who requites his friend's hoſpitality, by bringing in Thieves or Murderers upon him. A guilt ſo vehemently to be abhorred, that none is to think himſelf at a ſufficient and juſt diſtance from it, but he that induſtriouſly purſues the direct contrary; he therefore that hath a *Friend*, ought ſtudiouſly to contrive how he may moſt promote his advantages, and thoſe not only his outward and ſecular, but alſo (yea principally) his inward and ſpiritual. This is the only ſence wherein 'tis lawful to have deſigns upon him, and in this he is not only licenſed, but obliged to have ſo. He muſt here uſe all friendly ſtratagems to recommend and endear vertue to him, make his kindneſs the Vehicle, wherein the more gratefully to adminiſter whatever is moſt wholſom, even reproofs, when they appear ſo; and yet by taking his own turn in being the Patient, evince, that 'tis no aſſuming humour, that creates him a Phyſician. If friendſhips were thus managed, it would be indeed a moſt ſacred relation, ſuch as would be above the violations of thoſe petty trivial diſtaſtes, which now adays diſſolve them. Hearts that are tyed together with theſe conſecrated bands, are like *Man* and *Wife* joyned together inſeparably by God, and much for the ſame end of propagation; only herein as far ſuperior to their pattern, as the mind is to the body, the divine excellencies of a Saint to the natural compoſition of a man. We may reaſonably believe they were Friendſhips of this making, that firſt brought that name into ſo much veneration, and were they again reduced to this, no *Encomiums* could be too laviſh for them. Such a reducement were a work well worthy the ſpirit and ingenuity of *Gentlemen*: Who ſince they generally profeſs much reverence to the word, 'tis pity they ſhould caſt away their adorations on an empty ſhrine .The Heathens had *Incantations* to recal their diſpleaſed Deities into their forſaken Images. I wiſh they would alſo try ſome holy *magick* to bring back ſomewhat of the primitive divine ſpirit, to animate this now liveleſs trunk: That they who juſtly think it an *ungentile* reproachful thing, not to have ſome body whom they call Friend, may think it much more ſo, not to pay all the real kindneſs due to that appellation.

But too many do abuſe their Authority to countenance and throw contempt upon Piety and Virtue

5. Having thus far given an account what are the proper and juſt employmens of this Authority over their ſeveral *Relations*, our method now requires us to reflect a little on their *Practice*, and that in the moſt we ſhall find as far ſwerving from the rule in this particular, as any of the former. So far, alas, are *Gentlemen* from making their Power inſtrumental to the infuſing good, that there is nothing more ordinary than to ſee them diſpoſe it to the direct contrary. The ſcorn and contempt they publickly caſt upon all piety and vertue, teaches their Dependents how dead a trade

that is like to prove to them. And then 'tis very improbable that Godlyneſs ſhall with them caſt the ſcales againſt Gain. He that aims to get an Exhibition, or any thing proportionable, will ſoon diſcern his way lies in a quite oppoſite road. He muſt find out what Vice of the *Gentleman* he may be moſt ſerviceable to. Sometimes he muſt purvey for his Luſt, ſometimes for his Intemperance; and even when he has cloyed thoſe groſſer appetites, yet his Pride will always remain inſatiable. He muſt ſtill provide Air for that *Chamelion*, lay out his whole breath in flatteries (a more helliſh wind than any the *Laplanders* ſell.) 'Tis this enſhrining his *Diana* which is the *craft* by which he expects his *wealth*: And therefore whatever other office he executes by ſtarts, a *Paraſite* is to be his conſtant trade.

Servants are commonly made the miniſters of their Luxuries, and their Families the Schools of Vice and Intemperance.

6. In like manner their *Servants* are diſciplined to be the Miniſters of their Luxuries, and not only to ſerve but tranſcribe them. The Maſter's Vices ſeldom miſs to be taken up by the whole Houſe, as if they were to be the Cognizances and Badges to witneſs to whom they retained. And though for this they might very well truſt to the efficacy of their bare Example, yet as if they could never be ſecure enough of corrupting their Families, they too often add to it Precepts and Rules of Inſtitution. Thus it is one of the Fundamental Laws of their Hoſpitality, *That no ſtranger be ſent Sober away.* So that their Houſes may well paſs for *inchanted Caſtles*; no Man ſcarce that comes into them, being able to guide himſelf out. They keep as it were, ſolemn *Juſts* and *Tournaments* of Debauchery, to challenge all comers, and have variety of Champions to deal withal, Combatants of all ranks. In ſhort, *Gentlemens Families* are become ſuch perfect Academies of Licentiouſneſs, that the moſt innocent Puny will there in a very ſhort time become a Proficient. And this, God knows, is the ordinary improvement they make of their Authority; as if they affected to outbid the tyranny of the *Turk*, in ſending a Halter to his Vaſſals, and making them their own Executioners; or thought it a diſparagement to their Qualities, to go to Hell without an honourable Retinue.

The friendſhip, which is contracted among them now, becomes a bond of iniquity and combination againſt God and Virtue.

7. As for the other ſort of power, that which they have over their *Friends* and Intimates, 'tis not diſcernible that they manage that better. Who almoſt is there, that ſeems at all to advert to the Eſſential part of Friendſhip? What a Rarity, I had almoſt ſaid a Prodigy is it, to find (even amongſt thoſe that profeſs the greateſt dearneſs any that hath either the Courage to give, or the Humility to receive an Admonition? But inſtead of thoſe *wounds of a Friend*, *Prov.* 27. 6. there is nothing more common among them, than *the kiſſes of an Enemy*, ſuch mutual ſoothing in ill, as renders it inveterate and incurable; and like *Joab* to *Amaſa*, 2 *Sam.* 20. 10. *ſheds out the bowels*, when it pretends to *kiſs*. Nay as if it were not ſufficient for them to nouriſh thoſe Vices they find already planted, they ſow new Seeds, communicate their perſonal ones to each other, as if the community of Friendſhip obliged them mutually to diffuſe their poiſons. Were many of the cloſeſt intimacies now adays ranſacked to the bottom, it is to be feared this would be found the baſis and ground-work of them. He that hath advanced above the beaten road, arrived to the more elevated myſterious parts of wickedneſs, (*The depths of Satan, as they ſpeak*, *Rev.* 2. 24.) would loſe much of the guſt, if he ſhould not get ſome Confident, to whom at once to boaſt, and propagate his Proficiency. Thus ſacrilegiouſly is this venerable relation of Friendſhip profaned, by being proſtituted to the vileſt and moſt deteſtable purpoſes; and by this accurſed abuſe ſuffers the ſaddeſt *Metamorphoſis*, becomes only a Confederacy in ſin,

a Combination and league againſt what they account the common Enemies, God and Vertue.

The great pleaſure and happineſs they would have of being inſtrumental to the good of others, eſpecially of their Souls.

8. Theſe are ſuch wretched perverſions of their power, that one would gueſs it were ſome great and very conſiderable weight of *preſent Intereſt*, that ſhould thus byaſs and diſtort them. But when that is examin'd 'twill be found to lie wholly upon the other ſide. The former Section gave us occaſion to diſcern how tranſporting a delight it is, to be the Inſtrument of any good to others. But as there is no good can bear proportion with that which is done to the Soul, ſo certainly to be an Agent in that, muſt far tranſcend the pleaſure of all other Benefactions. He that ſo diſpenſes his Bounty, as to engage men to Vertue by it, is indeed the magnificent Perſon, out-vies the moſt profuſe Donations of the greateſt Potentates. They can give but ſome little parcels of Earth, he gives Heaven, and like a mighty Monarch hath Kings to do him homage. So he that by well ordering his Family, makes his Servants to be God's, does not only oblige the Common-wealth, but is as it were a Patriot even to Heaven it ſelf; provides it with Inhabitants, and helps to ſecure it from that emptineſs and depopulation, wherewith the general wickedneſs of men ſeems to threaten it. And then in relation to ſuch his Servants, he is of all other Maſters the moſt bountiful and obliging: They provide perhaps ſome petty Annuities, he gives a ſtate of Inheritance, nay of Eternity.

Gentlemen by doing good may Enrich others without Impoveriſhing themſelves:

9. This is a vaſt Munificence, yet that which the arranteſt Worldling can have no temptation to grudge. A man may thus without a Riddle give much, yet part with nothing, nay, acquire that very thing to himſelf, which he diſpenſes to others. So that here is no place for the uſual (though unjuſt) Objection of *impoveriſhing ones ſelf*, which is that alone which often deads the reliſh, or diverts the attempt of other Liberalities. And therefore this ſort which is reſcued from that one poſſible allay, muſt certainly yield the moſt vigorous and unmixt Pleaſure: It being ſure, that Bounty has in it ſelf ſo much of agreement with Humane Nature, as will inevitably produce Complacence and Delight, where it is not ſo interrupted or allayed.

By this means their Servants and Dependents will become more truſty and faithful in the management of their concerns.

10. I might here add *ex abundanti*, that there is likewiſe a *Secular Profit* attending it. For if *Gentlemen* had their Dependents truly Conſcientious, they would be of very much more uſe to them. They might employ them ſecurely, and need no other Spies upon them but their own Conſciences. 'Twould not then be, ſo many Servants ſo many Thieves and Harpyes, but ſo many Factors and Traffickers for the Maſters advantages. So that here again their own intereſt engages them to this Care: Though I confeſs 'tis to be wiſhed, that the former more ingenuous Motive may be ſo prevalent, as to ſuperſede all uſe of this; it being very unreaſonable that God ſhould need Auxiliaries from *Mammon*. Yet as once the *Iſraelites borrowed of the Egyptians*, ſo it may not be amiſs to make this Inferior conſideration a ſtep to the other more Noble: That even they who have yet no guſt of that more Heroick Pleaſure, may on the intuition of this Worldly advantage, endeavour to improve their Authority to the Spiritual good of all that belong to them.

The pleaſure of doing good to a Friend is equal to that which we receiv'd, or do to our Selves.

11. But from no part of this Performance may they reap ſo rich ſatisfaction, as from that which is exerciſed towards a *Friend*. For as their concernment is nearer in him, than in the former more diſtant Relations, ſo the Pleaſure of doing good to him, muſt proportionably encreaſe; as that heat is moſt intenſe which is conveyed by the neareſt Reflection. He who ſo maintains his Vital ſtation in the great Body, as to ſympathize with

every Member of it, muſt yet neceſſarily have the moſt acute ſenſe of what befalls thoſe parts, to which he is moſt immediately conjoined. But there is no ſtricter Union upon Earth, than that of a Virtuous *Friendſhip*; and then what can be more ſatisfactory, than to preſerve or advance the Health of that, whoſe Maladies himſelf is ſure to feel, to improve and benefit that perſon, who is thus become a part of him? Perſons of quality love to deck and imbelliſh the place where they inhabit, abhor to dwell in a Stie or Dungeon: But friends dwell in each other; and therefore cannot but be delighted in beautifying and adorning thoſe Minds they have thus choſen to live in, in purging them from all foulneſs and pollutions, and rendring them as pure and immaculate; nay, as ſplendid and illuſtrious, as is poſſible. Certainly, there is nothing upon Earth more raviſhing, than a *Friendſhip* thus entertained. 'Tis ſome Anticipation of Heaven, where thoſe lines of love, which ſtretch themſelves to every part of the Circumference, do all meet in God as their Centre. It is indeed that which ſurmounts the poſſibility of an exact deſcription, and reſerves its full diſcovery to be the prize of Experience. Let it be tried, and then I doubt not, but he that hath made the Experiment will readily atteſt the pleaſure of thus employing this part alſo of his Authority.

SECT. VIII.

Of the Laſt Advantage, that of Reputation.

1. THE laſt Advantage is that of *Reputation* and *Eſteem*: Which is generally preſumed the due of perſons of Quality, unleſs where ſome perſonal unworthineſs hath cut off the Entail, and forfeited that right. And though theſe days have taught the Vulgar to defalk much of that reſpect which former Ages paid to Superiors of all ſorts; yet I cannot think the *Levelling Principle* has ſo univerſally diffuſed it ſelf, as totally to raſe out all Impreſſions of Reverence towards them: So that there ſtill remains ſomewhat of this Talent for them to negotiate with. It will be their part ſo to manage and diſpoſe it, as to bring in profit to their Lord, by making it alſo an Engine to draw men to piety and virtue.

The Reputation of a Gentleman well manag'd is of great advantage to him.

2. This they may ſometime do by *Counſel*; to the ſucceſs whereof there is nothing more contributive than an eſteem of the Adviſer, moſt men being rather apt to conſider who ſpeaks, than what is ſpoken. And therefore perſons, whoſe Quality and Education have prepoſſeſt them with an opinion of their Wiſdom, have a great advantage towards the working on them. And this it will befit them to make diligent uſe of, by ſeaſonable advices and exhortations of thoſe whom they ſhall diſcern thus prepared for the entertaining of them, to take all prudent occaſions to recommend *Chriſtian Practice* to them, and by pulling off thoſe diſguiſes which the falſe meaſures of the World have put upon Vice and Vertue, to repreſent them in their true and native ſhapes, the one the object of horror and deteſtation, the other of love and delight. 'Tis the want of this diſcovery, that has given Impiety ſo free a range? It has dreſt it ſelf up in a counterfeit ſplendour, falſe Gems and Tinſel-gaudery: And in this glittering appearance it marches on triumphantly, receives acclamations, yea, and Obeiſance too, nay commands not only the knees, (as every proſperous Uſurper can do) but even the hearts of men. And will none have ſo much Charity, ſo much Zeal for publick Concern, as to uncloak

The advice given by a Gentleman carries more weight and Reputation along with it, than that which comes from a meaner perſon;

this Impoſtor, and ſhew the dazled World what it is it thus bows to? Perhaps this is lookt upon only as the buſineſs of Divines; but certainly would *Gentlemen* alſo ſet to it, they were like to prove the more proſperous undertakers. What comes only out of the Pulpit, paſſes for *the fooliſhneſs of Preaching*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. or for the diſcourſes of thoſe whoſe Trade it is to inveigh againſt ſin. All their *Thruſts* being of courſe, and expected, their *Wards* are as well known too; and we daily ſee Vice approve it ſelf an expert Fencer againſt them. But the endeavours of theſe would not be liable to thoſe prejudices: A blow from them would come (like the revolt of a Confederate) with the advantage of a Surpriſe. And there is little doubt, but by friendly and familiar Conferences they might many times inſinuate that into men's breaſts, which the more ſolemn and Authoritative Exhortations of Miniſters often fail of.

ſpecially if he ſeconds and confirms it by his own virtuous example.

3. But Counſel will be of little efficacy, if it be not ſeconded by *Example.* They muſt therefore look their Lives be ſuch, as may ſhew they believe themſelves, whilſt they go about to perſwade others. He that ſhall with never ſo preſſing arguments dehort a man from that Sin, which himſelf at the next opportunity commits, will never be ſuppoſed to have any real ill opinion of it, but rather ſo paſſionate a love, that he is jealous any but himſelf ſhould have its embraces. And then ſurely this will be ſo far from averting, that it will excite the appetite of the other to taſte of that which he ſees is thought ſo deſirable as to be Monopolized.

Gentlemen have a great advantage to draw their Dependents to the love of Virtue and Goodneſs by their countenance and encouragement;

4. Indeed there is nothing by which they have ſo univerſal *an influence*, as their Example. Things that are ſet in ſome high and eminent place, do naturally attract men's eyes to them, ſo that eminency of condition wherein *Gentlemen* are placed, renders their actions more obſervable. They are like the *City* our Saviour ſpeaks of, *ſet on an hill*, and have by that advantageous ſituation the means of making their *light ſhine farther* than other men's. And therefore it ought to be their conſtant care, by the bright luſtre of their exact and exemplary Converſations, to enlighten the whole ſphere wherein they move. Would *Gentlemen* make this their united deſign, what a happy Conſtellation of auſpicious Stars would they prove, by whoſe benign Aſpect the ſterility of Vulgar minds might be cured, and even thoſe Clods be inſpirited and rendred capable of excellent productions?

which would give Virtue a much greater Reputation among their Inferiors.

5. For what can be more *perſwaſive* to thoſe of the lower Ranks to embrace Vertue, than to ſee it made the election of thoſe whom they ſuppoſe to have moſt judgment to diſcern its value, and ſo fall not on it blindfold, and who have alſo all the contrary pleaſures of Sin within their reach; nay proſtrate at their feet, ſuing for entertaining, and ſo are not caſt on it by impotence? What a blur and infamy would it caſt upon Vice, if it were once baniſhed out of *Gentile* company? And how fair a ſtep would it be towards its excluſion out of all? We ſee what a natural aſpiring the lower ſort have to approach to the condition of their Betters. And though that being now aimed only at their Pomps and Greatneſs, be no commendable temper, yet ſure it were much in the power of thoſe emulated perſons to make it ſo. For would they ſo order the matter, that their Vertue ſhould out-ſhine all their outward ſplendors, that it ſhould become the character and diſtinctive note of a *Gentleman*, to be eminently good, this were a way to conſecrate even Ambition it ſelf, by making it an engine not to rack and torture men, as common ambitions do, but to advance them to all vertuous induſtry.

The abandoning of vice would truly ennoble and make them Gentlemen in deed.

6. He that deſired to ennoble his Family, would then begin at his Mind, caſt out thence all baſe and degenerous Inclinations, and make himſelf a *Gentleman* without help of Heraldry. Thus haply might they deceive men into Piety, and make thoſe Emulations, whoſe firſt riſe was meerly from Earth, a Ladder wherewith to ſcale Heaven. And how noble, how excellent a charity is this, and yet of all others the cheapeſt, it having that Proverbial property of Charity, *To begin at home*! The being good, is primarily a kindneſs to themſelves and to others only by way of reſult, and propagation, and eaſie conſequence. How unchriſtian, unmanly, yea unskilful too will it then be, to deny this benefaction, which has that very argument on its ſide, which is oppoſed to other kinds of Liberalities? That fear of leſſening a man's ſelf, which in thoſe, contracts and ſhuts up the bowels, is here in all reaſon to enlarge and dilate them; for in this caſe men cannot deny, without their own greateſt injury and diminution. And ſure 'twould juſtly paſs for a prodigy both of malice and folly, for one ſo to avert the benefiting another, as to incur the greateſt damage to himſelf in avoiding it.

Gentlemen abuſe their Reputation, in giving vice greater credit and encouragement than otherwiſe it would have;

7. But alas, it is not only Charity either to others or themſelves, which exacts of them thus to promote Piety among men. They have brought themſelves under another more conſtraining obligation, I mean that of *Juſtice*, particularly the juſtice of *Reſtitution*: For 'tis too viſible they have been deeply acceſſary to its decay. So far have they been from adviſing and exciting men to good, that I fear their perſwaſive faculties have generally been employed to a quite diſtant purpoſe. There are few or none, that by their own pious endeavours do at all abate the need of the Prieſts exhortations; but many that do evacuate their efficacy, by decrying it as the greateſt folly, the moſt unmanly ſubmiſſion, to yield them any conſideration. As for their own Counſels, they are too often in earneſt, what *Solomon*'s was by way of Irony, *Eccl.* 11. 9. *Walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes*, encouraging and animating men to all Senſuality. And if they diſcern any begin to ſtartle at the courſe, to entertain but a ſober thought of that diſmal end to which it leads; he is to be laught out of that *Hypochondriack fit*, taught to look upon it as a ſpice of Frenſie. The loud noiſe of roaring Mirth is re-inforced to drown that poor whiſper of Conſcience, and by the ſound as it were of thoſe Trumpets he is incited to turn to his courſe, as the horſe *ruſheth into the battel*, *Jer.* 8. 6. all arts of encouragement uſed to embolden him to run fearleſly on to Damnation. This is their own known *Recipe*---for all pangs and gripes of Soul. And if it be not of every day's practice, 'tis not, that they have any better method of Cure, but ſuch arts of prevention, ſuch means of ſtupefaction and obduration, that the diſeaſe ſeldom occurs among them.

which they likewiſe confirm by their own evil example.

8. Nor do they omit to back and fortifie this with proportionable *Examples*: Which God knows are ſo many and ſo efficacious, that like a diſmal Cloud they overſpread our whole Horizon. They who are by God deſigned as lights to illuminate all about them, have been the inſtruments of introducing a more than *Ægyptian* darkneſs, thereby exemplifying that Aphoriſm of our Saviour's, *Matth.* 6. 23. *If the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs*!

Gentlemen are grown publickly vicious, and countenance profaneneſs in an open and ſcandalous manner;

9. What a deluge of Profaneneſs and Impiety at this day overflows this poor Nation, is too viſible not only by the direct, but the reflexed beams of thoſe ſad Judgments they have brought down upon it. And though there be too many ſprings which feed this Ocean, yet there will ſcarce

any be found to have more liberally contributed, than the open and ſcandalous viciousneſs of the *Gentry*. They who are placed as Stars in our Firmament, if they dart nothing but malignant Influences, what wonder is it, if an univerſal Peſt enſue? 'Tis they that have brought Vice into countenance, made it the mode and faſhion of the times, ſo that People dread the ſingularity of being innocent, and a Man may with leſs peril of ſcorn appear in the moſt ſuperannuated dreſs, than own the Obſolete qualities of Meekneſs, Purity, Sobriety, &c. How great and fatal a ſnare this *creditableneſs* of ſin has proved, I fear there are too many thouſands of entangled Souls can witneſs. And on whom can they more properly charge their ruine, than on thoſe who have advanced it to this repute in the World? Men's natural pravity gives them propenſion more than enough to ill; and therefore it hath been the buſineſs of Laws both Humane and Divine to put a bridle upon thoſe inclinations, by fear and ſhame to reſtrain their inordinacy: But this converts the bridle into a ſpur, when thoſe that ſhould diſcountenance Vice, thus animate and encourage it.

which is a great Temptation for the common people to imitate, and grow like them.

10. For what a Temptation is it to the vulgar *to run to all exceſs of Riot*, when they ſee their Superiors have beaten the path before them, and are themſelves immerſt in the moſt brutiſh ſenſualities? Which of them will endure to be ſober, when Drunkenneſs ſhall be accounted ſo dignifying a quality, that it may make a Peaſant company for a Lord? When *Gentlemen* are Atheiſtical, Clowns will think themſelves very modeſtly wicked, if they be but profane. And when they hear their Betters diſcharge loud Volleys of Oaths, they will ſoon find they are as well qualified for that part of greatneſs as the beſt. *Their Tongues* are as much *their own*, *Pſal.* 12. 4. and will be glad that by ſuch an eaſie imployment of them they can be *Gentlemen* ſo good cheap. 'Twere as endleſs as unneceſſary to enumerate the ſeveral ſorts of infection, which the ill examples of great Men have diffuſed. 'Tis too obvious in the moral effects to need any other way of diſcovery. And I am ſure it ought to be matter of the ſaddeſt reflection to all who are involved in that guilt; it being a moſt direful account which they will one day have to make, who have been the Authors of ſuch miſerable vaſtations, turned Communities of Men, of Chriſtians, into Herds of Beaſts, nay into Legions of Devils.

The ſins of great Men receive a mighty aggravation from the Number of thoſe that are miſled by their example,

11. Every ſin even of the privateſt obſcureſt perſon carries much of contempt and affront to the Divine Majeſty: But great Men's vices are of a yet more giantly frame, they proclaim ſolemn War with Heaven, levy forces and draw in multitudes of abettors and confederates in their hoſtilities. And God knows this kind of Unevangelical *violence* the *Kingdom of Heaven daily ſuffers*. O that the Chieftains and Leaders of theſe unhappy troops, would at laſt think fit to ſound a retreat; that they would, in pity if not to themſelves, yet to their ſeduced followers, ceaſe thus deſperately to ruſh on upon the mouth of the Cannon, the Jaws of Hell! And not only ſo, but that they would alſo endeavour to bring them into ſome terms of accord with that omnipotent Enemy they have provoked; by their own penitent and reformed lives teach them the poſtures of humility and ſubmiſſion, as they have formerly done that of defiance. This certainly is that to which common equity obliges them, reparation of injuries being confeſſedly an indiſpenſable part of of juſtice. And certainly there can no injury exceed, nay equal this of betraying Men to eternal ruine: And conſequently nothing leſs than the utmoſt induſtry to repair it can be any competent expiation. God grant all thoſe, whoſe guilt gives them a peculiar title to this admonition, may own their right to it by a particular and ſeri-

ous application, ſuch as may for the future engage them to the moſt zealous endeavour of reforming not only themſelves, but others, for reſcuing their reputation from that fouleſt blot of being an Agent for Satan, and advancing it to that higheſt dignity of being ſerviceable to God.

who, for the moſt part, take wrong meaſures of Honour and Gallantry,

12. But there is little hope they will rightly conſider the uſe, who are ſo utterly miſtaken in the nature of true reputation. A *man of Honour* is now underſtood only to be one that can ſtart and maintain a Quarrel, that for every the triflingeſt injury expects like *Lamech, Gen.* 4. 24. to be *avenged ſeventy and ſeven fold*; that deſpiſes the Chriſtian precepts of Meekneſs, Long-ſuffering, and Forgiveneſs, as rudiments of cowardiſe and unmanly puſilanimity, and has no other meaſure of courage and gallantry, but by an utter oppoſition to all thoſe. And whileſt *reputation* is thus hung only at the point of the Sword, 'tis a very fit inſtrument to deſtroy Bodies, but ſure not to ſave Souls. We find daily many occaſions to complain of the Tyranny of Cuſtom and Opinion, but ſcarce any where ſo much as in thoſe unjuſt and abſurd Laws they have impoſed in this matter: Which were they conſideringly weighed would ſurely evince them ſuch contemptible Legiſlators, as would be enough to dethrone and depoſe them from that uſurped Empire they now maintain in the World.

and ſuch as are contrary to the Rules and Precepts of the Goſpel,

13. To take only a ſhort and curſory view of them, we ſhall in the firſt place find them to be horribly impious. For what can be more ſo, than thus to tear off thoſe ſignatures of Honour, which God himſelf hath impreſt, and vilifie thoſe whom he hath dignified? God hath pronounced that it is the *diſcretion of a man that deferreth his anger, and* it is *his glory to paſs over a tranſgreſſion, Prov.* 19. 11. And again, *He that is ſlow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his ſpirit, than he that taketh a City, Prov.* 16. 32. But this new notion of Honour proclaims the quite contrary; he paſſes for a Phlegmatick fool, whoſe bloud boils not at the firſt glimpſe of an Affront; and 'tis Gallantry to offer many Injuries, but ignominious Tameneſs to bear one. It has always been the indiſputable prerogative of *Kings* to be the *Fountains of Honour*; what an impious daring is it then to diveſt him of that priviledge, *by whom Kings reign*? To cancel his Patents, and mark them out as the objects of ſcorn, to whom God gives ſo glorious a teſtimony? Yet thus is it daily done to the Men, whom the *King of Kings will honour*; theſe are all the Triumphs theſe *Mordecais* muſt expect; and evidence how much worſe they are than *Haman*, that allot them. Certainly there cannot be an act of greater defiance againſt the Divine Majeſty than thus to reverſe his Decrees. And upon this hoſtility and oppoſition againſt Heaven it is, that all the *private Quarrels*, and Combats on Earth are (as on their foundation) ſuperſtructed ſo that to inititate a Dueliſt, his firſt *Challenge* muſt be directed againſt God himſelf.

and oppoſite to common prudence and ordinary Diſcretion, as is particularly notorious in the caſe of Duels.

14. Nor are theſe falſe meaſures of Honour more oppoſite to Religion, than Prudence. The gloſſes the *Sword-men* have put upon the one fundamental Law of *Not bearing an Injury*, have introduced ſuch a multitude of ridiculous Punctilio's, that the next Age will be in danger of receiving the Fable of *Don Quixot* for Authentick Hiſtory. And I ſee not with what juſtice this can laugh at them in him and his Squire *Sancho*, and yet think them ſerious enough to govern Men in their moſt real and weighty concernments. It would indeed aſtoniſh any ſober perſon to conſider, what *Chimæra's* they are, to which Men ſacrifice all that ought to be dear to them. How many *Duels* have been fought, how many Men kill'd, (when neither of the Combatants were ſo implacable but that they could willingly have compounded the matter) only becauſe they thought point of Ho-

nour exacted it, and the declaring it would be inglorious? Certainly the Gallies is a ſtate of perfect liberty, compared with this bondage. And were the Releaſe from thoſe neceſſarily to infer a ſubjection to this, were thoſe Slaves obliged thus to become *Gentlemen*, I ſhould ceaſe my wonder why ſo many of them have deſpiſed a manumiſſion. For thus to have a Man's Eſtate, his Life, yea Soul too, at the mercy of Popular breath, (not only to be loſt, but loſt by his own act) is a ſlavery beyond all that the moſt abject creature ever groan'd under. And yet ſo prodigiouſly abſurd is the World, as to cut this out for the *Benjamin's portion*, make it the eſpecial and peculiar privilege of *Gentlemen*. They are ſet upon a Theatre, and as the *Gladiators* of old muſt kill one another, only to entertain Spectators. And who would not think *Bedlam* the only Seminary to breed Men up for ſuch a Trade? Yet ſo univerſal is this Lunacy, that one may ſupect the Inſtitution of that Hoſpital is perverted, that that incloſes only the Sober perſons, whileſt the Frantick run looſe about the World.

The great Sin and miſchievous Effects of fighting Duels,

15. But perhaps the more Malicious *Duellers* will think themſelves exempt from this number, becauſe 'tis their own ſatisfaction which they deſign in it: Their Enemies bloud will make ſo delicious a Draught for their Revenge, that they gaſp after it, and think it a pleaſure well worthy their purſuit. But ſure theſe differ from the former, not as Wiſe men from Fools, but as a worſe Natured Fool from a better. He that would juſtifie the rationalneſs of any Adventure, muſt prove the Prize at leaſt to equal the worth of that he hazards for it. But who that conſiders he has a Soul, can ſeriouſly ſet it at ſo contemptible a rate? Or what Man in his wits, that believes a Hell, will ſay the pleaſure of a Revenge can countervail thoſe pains? Nay indeed, none can with any pretence put it in balance with the meer loſs of Life. For he that is kill'd (as every Man may be that fights) can have no ſenſe of that pleaſure, and ſo becomes uncapable of the compenſation, if that were able to make it. Nay, I ſhall deſcend yet lower, and with ſome confidence affirm, that the uneaſie conſequences even of the victory do quite overwhelm the ſatisfaction. For this I dare refer my ſelf to any of thoſe who have had the unhappy Triumph of a *Murderer*, and doubt not that if they will ſpeak their experiences, they will tell us that the cry of their Adverſaries bloud in their Conſcience, did utterly extinguiſh the reliſh of it in their Fancy. Or if they were perſons that were hardned againſt all ſenſe of Divine vengeance, yet the fear of Humane was abundantly enough to defeat them of that pleaſure they expected: So impoſſible is it to *gather Grapes of* theſe *Thorns*, to reap any contentment from ſo unchriſtian an attempt. Their revenge is not compleated without Bloud: And if they have it, it proves a Torrent to carry away that imaginary Delight they projected from it. And then what colour of reaſon can any Man bring why he ſhould thus *ſell his Soul for nought*, and become a *Platonick* to Damnation?

which gratifies only for the preſent a furious and revengeful Paſſion.

16. But *Revenge* has two ill match'd qualities, Blindneſs and Impetuoſity; and ſo all its darts, though they carry force and venome enough to deſtroy all about them, yet by being ill aimed revert mortally on the breaſt whence they were ſhot. Certainly there is not in the World a more prodigious Infatuation, than that which rules in this affair. What can be more ſenceleſs, than for me, when a Man has done me an Injury, to think to wipe off that by expoſing my ſelf to more? When he has given me the Lye, to invite him to give me the Stab too? Did ever any man attempt to make up a breach by widening it? To cloſe his wound by tearing it further? The Phyſicians indeed talk of a method of curing ſome Diſeaſes by

Majoration: But ſure Injuries are not in the number of thoſe maladies, not capable of that way of remedy. The greater may, 'tis poſſible, overwhelm, but not cure the leſs, as the more moderate Pains become inſenſible by the ſuperveniency of the more acute. Yet I preſume none will applaud his choice, that ſhould call for the Rack to drown the pain of a cut finger, which yet is no hyperbolical Emblem of this ſort of Revenge.

There is a great deal of cowardiſe in the ſeeming courage and gallantry of our Dueliſts,

17. But beſides all this, our *modern Gallantry* is treacherous to it ſelf, confutes its own pretenſion, and whilſt it vainly aſſumes the Monopoly of Courage, is indeed the meaneſt Cowardiſe in the World. That by which we uſe to diſcriminate baſe fear from juſt caution, is the formidableneſs of the object feared. No man is reproached for not ſtanding the inundation of the Sea; but to quake at ſtepping over a Gutter, would be a ridiculous timorouſneſs. 'Twould be neither wonder nor ſhame to run from the purſuit of a Lion; but to be chaſed by a barking Whelp, is the property of an Hare, not of a Man. And according to this meaſure, what wretched Cowards are our greateſt *Hectors*? For what can be more contemptible than thoſe unjuſt Scorns of Men they ſo tremble at? Which if they were ſure to be univerſal, yet what real ill can they do a Man, who does not by his own fancy lend them an edge wherewith to wound him? But neither can this be the Caſe, till all both Chriſtianity and Sobriety be quite worn out of the World. For to a Chriſtian, 'tis certain the irreligion of fighting a Duel would be the moſt infamous thing, and even to a ſober Heathen the folly of it would be ſo too: So that he can be in no danger, of either of their Reproaches, for declining it. And when theſe are ſet aſide, who is there whoſe cenſure can be at all conſiderable? Yet this ſo pitiful deſpicable thing is it, which ſo terrifies and amazes them. And how ſhall we define Cowardiſe, if this be not it?

and no leſs the danger, upon which they run themſelves by their fool-hardineſs.

18. And as it has the nature, ſo has it the Fate of it too, which uſually is by fleeing an imaginary danger, to fall into a real. Men fight, that they may not be thought Cowards; and by fighting they do not only become indeed ſo, but alſo ruſh themſelves upon other far more formidable miſchiefs, run from a Scare-crow into a *Precipice*. And now what a Riddle is this thing they call *Gallantry*, which ſo ſtartles at the weakeſt noiſe, yet ſtands undauntedly the ſtroke of a Thunderbolt? They who ſo dread the reproach of vain impotent Men, do yet confidently encounter the anger of the omnipotent God; and if Valour and Fool-hardineſs were not very diſtant things, would confute my whole argument by making it evident, that they dare be damned. Thus by a ſtrange kind of inverted operation their Fear makes them bold: Would God that *Antipariſtaſis* might go on to work, till that Boldneſs have again brought them to a fear, I mean that penitential Fear, proper to thoſe who thus deliberately provoke the Divine Majeſty.

The ſin of Duelling receives a very great aggravation from the deliberation wherewith oftimes it is accompanied.

19. And that very *Deliberation* is a circumſtance of ſo great an enhanſement, as unmeaſurably heightens the ſin. Sudden acts may be capable of ſome alleviations by the ſurpriſe they make on a Man's ſpirit: But contrived and premeditated Crimes can have no milder appearance than of obſtinate Rebellion. And this aggravation can ſcarce ever be wanting to a *Duel*; many hours, if not days intervening between the Deſignment and the Execution. And in that interval 'tis not poſſible for all the Opiate Receipts in Satan's Diſpenſatory to keep the Conſcience ſo drowſie, that it ſhall not ſtartle, but it will undoubtedly repreſent to a Man the horror of that he is going about: Which is no leſs than the engaging himſelf in a double Murder, his own, and his Adverſaries. For the wilful hazard of

both faſten on him the guilt, though both happen to ſurvive the Combate. But if it be his own fate to fall (as he has much reaſon to expect, who thus puts himſelf out of God's protection, nay dares his vengeance) what poſſible hope can remain for him, who thus dies in that very act of the greateſt ſin? We are generally apt to think but uncomfortably of thoſe who *make away* themſelves: But certainly many of thoſe deſerve to be Canonized, in compariſon with a Man that dies in *Duel*; the Principle of that being often an exceſſive Fear of God, which ſure is leſs culpable, than a profane contempt of him. Beſides, the temptation in that caſe is uſually more violent and impetuous; it being (if not begot, yet) cheriſht and fomented by Melancholy, the moſt untractable and obſtinate of all humors: Whereas the ſuggeſtion to this hath no ſuch Auxiliary to aid it, the original of Quarrels being frequently from too free a Jollity. And laſtly, that, of how heinous a kind ſoever, is yet but a ſingle ſin, whereas this, as I ſaid before, involves a twofold guilt. And of how crimſon a colour muſt that ſoul appear before God's Tribunal that is thus double-dyed in Bloud!

And ſo doth the danger, from that little Time which they have to Repent in, who are commonly cut off in the very act and moment they are guilty of this ſin.

20. And now who can chuſe but cry out in the Prophet *Eſay's* ſtile, *Hear O Heavens, and hearken O Earth?* What ſtrain of wonder and amazement can bear proportion with the deſperate madneſs of Men, that can thus knowingly and conſideringly ruſh themſelves upon ſuch unſpeakable miſchiefs? Eſpecially ſince here they want even that miſerable Reſerve, which ſerves to embolden them to other ſins, *viz.* the hope of a future repentance. For thoſe that make but the ſlighteſt meaſures of that, can ſcarce fanſie any opportunities of it in this caſe: Since to him that dies, there ſeldom remains any ſpace of interval between his ſin and his death, no time for thoſe clouds to gather, thoſe penitential ſhowers to deſcend, which ſhould waſh away his blood-guiltineſs; or if there did, yet what expectation is there he ſhould imploy it to any effect? Such preſumptuous conſiderate ſins naturally work an obduration in the heart, which nothing but an extraordinary grace can remove; and after ſuch an high and daring provocation; 'tis very reaſonable to expect God ſhould withdraw even the loweſt degrees, but ſure not that he ſhould add higher.

'Tis heartily wiſh'd that this barbarous cuſtom were wholly forgot and laid aſide.

21. Theſe conſiderations are all of them ſo obvious, that they naturally ſuggeſt themſelves. And certainly they are ſo weighty and preſſing, that 'tis a Prodigy to ſee they ſhould be ſo univerſally ineffectual: Which can proceed from nothing but the want of cloſe and ſerious application. Would Men dare but to meet ſingle with their own ſober thoughts, 'twould certainly ſuperſede all other *Duels*. There remains therefore nothing for me to add, but to invite them to this one Encounter, to beſeech them to grapple a-while but with the force of Reaſon, a Combate of all others the ſecureſt, where to be ſubdued is more glorious than to conquer in any other: And when it has deſpoiled them of that falſe courage, which expoſes them to ſuch diſmal ruines, to permit it to re-inſpirit them with a true one, ſuch as may give them daring enough to ſtand up againſt this ſo more than Barbarous a cuſtom; to endeavour to baniſh it out of *Chriſtendom*, and ſo take off that Reproach which our profeſſion lies under from ſo impious a practice, which having no other Tenure but Preſcription, there needs nothing but Deſuetude to deſtroy it. Let every Man for his own part ſtrictly abſtain from it, and avow the doing ſo, and then by ceaſing to be a Faſhion, it will ceaſe to be at all.

There are but a few that have the courage to begin and ſet the example.

22. But the miſery of it is, no Man will aſſume to be *Leader* in this ſo noble an Enterpriſe, to begin this ſo neceſſary a Reformation: Which though it have ſo much more of compliance even to carnal Intereſts, than

its contrary, that I doubt not many wiſh it were univerſal; yet till it be ſo they think 'twill be uncreditable to any particular perſon. But were that the certain event of it, 'tis ſure that reproach ought to be deſpiſed, when it comes in competition with Duty. In this caſe the reſolution of *David* (as great a *Sword-man* as any of them) is moſt proper; *I will yet be more vile than thus*, 2 *Sam.* 6. 22. And certainly a man cannot paſs a more glorious Martyrdom, than to ſuffer ignominy, upon ſuch an account. I am ſure 'tis a real ſhame to ſee that Men can offer violence to all their deareſt complicated Intereſts to comply with that unchriſtian cuſtom, yet cannot croſs a ſingle imaginary one, to ſuppreſs it.

23. Nay the truth is, they create Punctilio's in this caſe, by which themſelves will not be govern'd in any other. In a common *Fire* does any Man ſuſpend his own endeavours, till he ſee the whole Town running to quench the flame? Or if one of theſe popular perſons had been of the *Philiſtines* company, *when the houſe began to fall*, *Judg.* 16. 30. would he have ſo dreaded the ſingularity of a ſolitary eſcape, as not to have attempted it, till ſhoals of others had led the way? We have had ſome experience, under what prejudice a *publick Act* falls, that is by its makers precluded from being a precedent. And ſure theſe Men do tacitly (yet very intelligibly) accuſe the unreaſonableneſs of this fear, whilſt they confine it to this ſingle inſtance. And methinks 'twere but juſt, they ſhould be required to be conſentaneous to themſelves, and act in other things by the ſame meaſures, which would prove ſo ſharp a penance as were more likely to reduce them to ſobriety, than all the force of Argument.

Men ought to decline Duels out of Conſcience rather than Cowardiſe.

24. But beſides this ſevere Remedy, there is ſure an *Antidote* againſt this *Malady*, a way to ſeparate the Duty from the Contempt which their fancies have ſo cloſely annext to it: And that is by making their lives ſo uniformly Chriſtian, that it may be evident, 'tis Conſcience, not Fear that works with them. Without this I know indeed no ſecurity from reproach. For to ſee a Man, who tramples upon all other commands of God, catch up this, as a Buckler againſt a Challenger, who can be ſo blindly charitable, as to impute this to any thing but Cowardiſe? But when the whole tract of a Man's life is one continued courſe of Obedience, no Man will expect he ſhould violate that upon this occaſion. To this may be added a chearful and free expoſing himſelf to all warrantable dangers, when any publick occaſion of hazard is offered: If he then ſhew himſelf daring, 'twill be apparent, that 'tis not the fear of Death, but Sin, which locks up his Sword from private *Duels*. Or when there is no opportunity of this active valour, let him approve his paſſive by a contented, nay joyful ſubmiſſion to any ſuffering, that attends the diſcharge of a good Conſcience: And of this there is little fear (in theſe days eſpecially) to want occaſions. He that does this, will be in no danger to be defamed for declining *Duels*: But on the contrary ſuch an equable piety will extort reverence from all; there being ſuch a venerable amability in it, that the moſt profane do even againſt their wills bear it ſome inward reſpect.

25. Let not Men therefore pretend the *Fear of Reproach*, as an excuſe, ſince here is ſo ready a *Salvo* for that objection: But let them by an aſſiduous practice of all other Chriſtian Virtues, render this alſo ſecure to them, and qualifie themſelves for the propagating it to others. And Oh, that we could once ſee all other quarrels amongſt *Gentlemen* converted into this one holy contention, who ſhould be forwardeſt in this Heroick attempt. 'Tis the falſe notion of Honour, that is one of Satan's principal Citadels, like *Zion* to the *Jebuſites*: And the aſſaulting of that would be

an atchievement of ſo much glory, that he that could proſper in it, might juſtly challenge the dignity which *David* there promiſes, 2 *Sam.* 5. 8. *of being Chief and Captain.* Here then they may lawfully quench their thirſt of Honour, yea and that of Revenge too, by wrecking their utmoſt malice on this their ſo grand Enemy. Let it be remembred how long it hath beſooled and cheated the World, and be expoſed to all the ſhames and deteſtation of a diſcovered Impoſtor. Nay, let it be brought to a ſolemn Arraignment, thoſe innumerable Murders, of which it has been guilty, charged on it, and proſecuted to death, ſo utterly extinguiſhed, that it may never again appear in the World, whilſt all good men applaud the juſtice, and ſay, *So let thine enemies periſh, O Lord.*

A great pleaſure in being Inſtrumental to draw men off from ſin, and bring them to Repentance.

26. Having thus reflected on the common *Abuſes* of *Reputation*, all that remains is to conſider how injurious men are to themſelves in their ill managery of this Talent, which might be improved not only to their final account, but even their preſent pleaſure. For firſt, he that by ſeaſonable advice reſcues any man from a courſe of ſin, will infallibly feel ſo unutterable a complacency in having done ſo, that he will find he was kind to himſelf, as well as the other, and will have no temptation to think himſelf unprofitably imployed, though that were to be his only Reward. This bringing ſinners to repentance is ſo noble, ſo tempting a deſign, that it drew even God himſelf from Heaven to proſecute it; and that not by cheap and eaſie means, but by all thoſe Sufferings, which humane Nature moſt trembles at: Yet ſuch was *the joy* of Man's ſalvation, which was *ſet before him*, as enabled him to *endure the Croſs, and deſpiſe the ſhame*, Heb. 12. 2. How rich a bargain will it then be to a man to partake with him in that joy, to ſhare with him in that prize, upon ſo much eaſier terms, to pay but a little breath for that which exhauſted his blood, and to become (in a lower inferior ſence) a Saviour without a Croſs?

The great happineſs of encouraging men to Vertue and Piety, by ſetting a good Example.

27. In like manner he that by a ſtrict and exemplary converſation ſets himſelf up a *Landmark* to direct men in this turbulent and dangerous *Sea*, his light, 'tis true, goes forth to others, but the warmth and cheriſhing heat of it remains within his own breaſt. What chearful, what exulting reflections may he make upon himſelf, that can make good St. *Paul's* proteſtation, *Act.* 20. 26. that *he is pure from the bloud of all men?* That he hath not by any ſcandalous Example enſnared any Soul; but on the contrary hath by poſitive illuſtrious acts of Vertue endeavoured ſo to adorn his Chriſtian Profeſſion, as to draw in Proſelytes not to the Name, but the obedience of Chriſt? That hath made it his buſineſs to ſtand in the Gap, not only by his interceſſions with God againſt the Plagues, but by his endeavours with men againſt the ſins of the Nation, and by a ſteady oppoſing himſelf againſt the inundation of profaneneſs and licentiouſneſs, hath invited others to give ſome ſtop to thoſe impure torrents? It has always been accounted ſo glorious a thing to redeem ones Country from ſlavery, that men have thought their greateſt hazards amply paid with the Title of a Patriot. But there is no vaſſalage ſo ignoble, no ſervitude ſo miſerable, as that of Vice, and conſequently no attempt ſo worthy, ſo ingenuous, ſo ſatisfactory to the undertaker, as to break that yoke. He that aſpires to no more than a private Innocence, is only on the defenſive part, ſtands upon his guard againſt Satan: But he that aims at this ſort of publick Reformations, maintains an invaſive War againſt him, and ſo more ſhakes his Kingdom. The reducing of any ſinner is the diſpoſſeſſing him of ſo much of his uſurpt Territory, and weakens his Empire in the world. This is indeed the true *Publick Spirit*: Which though many have pretended to,

from whom we diſcern nothing of theſe effects; yet thoſe very pretenſions bear witneſs to the excellency of the thing, and ought to animate men to be indeed, what ſo many have coveted to be thought.

28. I ſuppoſe I need not go on to the other inſtance: Every man's ſenſe, without conſulting either his Reaſon or Religion, will be able to pronounce that 'tis better to be in Peace than Hoſtility, to have a whole than a wounded body, to keep ſecurely his own ſtation, than to be hunted like a *Partridge on the mountains* by the *avenger of Bloud.* The greater is the Miracle, that men who in all other inſtances devote themſelves wholly to their ſenſuality, ſhould here only abjure it; that when Body and Soul come in competition, live as if they had no Soul, yet upon this occaſion can dare, as if they had no Bodies. Oh that men ſhould be ſuch ill huſbands of their ſufferings, and thus enhanſe Satan's markets! Alas, *Hell* is a Purchace will never be taken out of their hands; how many Chapmen ſoever they ſee about it, they may ſecure their Eſtate there firm enough by thoſe ſins they have more guſt of: Why ſhould they be thus madly prodigal to out-bid the common rate! Muſt *Gentlemen* buy Damnation as they uſually do Wares, dearer than other men? How is Perdition become ſo amiable, that like *Rachel, a double ſervitude* is judged light for it; whilſt Heaven in the mean time, like *Leah, is ſo* much *deſpiſed,* that 'tis thought an injury to have that obtruded on them, though upon the eaſieſt terms? Certainly they are ſtrange transforming *Opticks* which theſe men make uſe of. Would God they could be but perſwaded if not to break, yet at leaſt for a while to lay by thoſe falſe *Glaſſes,* and behold things in their genuine and proper ſhapes: And then I doubt not they will diſcern that Honour to be infamy, which ſets men at defiance with God; and that Reputation then alone becomes eſtimable, when like a River it pays its Tribute to the Ocean, promotes his Glory, at whoſe feet Kings (without diminution) caſt both themſelves and Crowns.

There is much more ſatisfaction to live in peace and ſafety in the World, than to be always engag'd in fighting and quarrelling.

SECT. IX.

THE CONCLUSION.

1. WE have now according to our propoſed Method, ſurveyed diſtinctly thoſe ſeveral *Advantages* which *Gentlemen* enjoy, and may ſurely give the ſame teſtimony which *Caleb* and *Joſhua* did of *Canaan,* Numb. 14. *The Land which we paſſed thorow to ſearch it, is an exceeding good Land.* 'Tis a rich aud fertile Soil wherein theſe men are planted, ſuch as hath a natural aptitude and vigour to produce the moſt excellent Fruits. But *Paradiſe* it ſelf required dreſſing, and therefore we find *Adam* had that work aſſigned him in his Innocence. And ſurely theſe his Sons may well ſubmit to the ſame Task: By the faithful diſcharge whereof they may make ſome approaches towards that his priſtine ſtate.

The Concluſion of the whole, containing an enforcement of all the foregoing particulars.

2. It need not be again inculcated, that all theſe their Receits have their ſpecial and particular ends in God's aſſignment. 'Twill be more uſeful to remember them, how nearly they are concern'd not to pervert the Counſel of God againſt themſelves, by neglecting to give them their due expected improvements. For though he be a moſt liberal, yet is he not a negligent Maſter, but keeps an exact and punctual account of whatever he thus delivers out, and will not fail ſeverely to avenge the embezeling of his Goods. indeed ſuch an abuſe has ſo fatal an efficacy that it quite changes their Nature,

converts them from Bleſſings to the heavieſt Curſes: Would God too many men had not thus exemplified their own deſtructive power, and by a kind of *Anti-creation* brought Darkneſs out of Light.

3. But 'tis pity they ſhould be permitted to ſleep in that Darkneſs, which themſelves have made. And therefore if this *little Tract* ſhall fall into any ſuch hands, it muſt avow to come upon that uncivil yet friendly Errand, to diſturb their reſt, to awake them to ſome Conſideration, and as *Philip's* Monitor was to *remember him, that he was but a Man*, ſo to put them in mind, that in the midſt of their freeſt enjoyments, they are ſtill but *Stewards*, and know not how ſoon their Lord may ſummon them to their Accounts. And with what confuſion and conſternation muſt they appear at the great *Audit*, who have ſo unfaithfully manag'd their truſt? 'Tis therefore now no longer time to dally, but by an aſſiduous care and diligence to endeavour to redeem their paſt ill-husbandry, leſt they run the fate of that *Evil Servant* mention'd, *Matth.* 24. be ſurpriſed in the midſt of their Inordinacies, and have their *portion* aſſigned them in *weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth*.

4. And now what Objection can they poſſibly make againſt this ſo neceſſary a Caution, which is founded upon ſuch Motives, as ſhould methinks infallibly prevail upon all ſorts of tempers? If they have any ſenſe of Fear, here are thoſe terrors of the Lord, which are amazing enough to ſet even a *Belſhazzar* (though with the Cup at his Mouth, his Concubines by his ſide) *a trembling*. Certainly he muſt not be only frozen but petrified in deſperate impiety, whom even a glimpſe of thoſe Eternal flames will not be able to diſſolve.

5. But if *Fear* (though of God) be too degenerous a Paſſion for a *Gentleman* to own, this advice can upon as good grounds addreſs it ſelf to their *Hope*: There is as well the *Joy of the Lord* for the *Faithful*, as the *outer Darkneſs* for the *unprofitable Servant*. For though God have Right of abſolute Dominion, and might exact obedience on his bare command; yet he is more pleaſed to ſhew himſelf a Benefactor than a Lord, and therefore deſcends to treat with men by the more gentle and inviting methods of Promiſes and Rewards. Nay indeed the end of his Commands is only to make us capable Subjects of thoſe Eternal Felicities he deſires to beſtow. And this ſurely is enough to excite men to a diligent negotiating with thoſe Talents they have received, ſince it is indeed themſelves they are trading for. The Stock it is true is God's, but all the increaſe of it will by his bounty certainly devolve on them. And therefore as *Naaman's* Servants thought the cure he was in a purſuit of, deſerved a ſubmiſſion to the ſevereſt Preſcriptions, *If the Prophet had bid thee do ſome great thing, wouldſt thou not have done it?* 2 *King.* 5. 3. So ſurely we may conclude thoſe endleſs Joys propoſed by God, are cheaply earned even by the moſt exhauſting Labours, the moſt vigorous Tasks.

6. But ſuch is the tenderneſs and indulgence of our grcious Maſter, ſo earneſt his deſire of his diſpenſing his Rewards, that he will not truſt men's ſloth and folly with ſuch a pretence of defeating themſelves; and therefore hath annexed no ſuch Condition. We have ſeen, through all the ſeveral parts of Duty, which conſtitute the *Gentleman's Calling*, that they are of a quite diſtant frame, not Toils but Refreſhments, not Yokes but Crowns, ſuch as differ only in ſize from thoſe Celeſtial ones to which they tend; ſo that here is bait even to the greateſt Voluptuary. And who that obſerves how many ſuch there be, would expect this *Fruit of Paradiſe* ſhould ſtill hang untouched? Yet ſuch a prepoſterous Temperance have they put

on, that they are proof againſt all theſe allurements. Good God! What contradictions are men made up of! It is the buſineſs of their lives to purſue pleaſures, and yet when thoſe of the moſt refined and exquiſite ſort would run into their embraces, they grow coy, and cannot be courted to receive them. We daily ſee the Devil hath his *Martyrs*: It ſeems he hath his *Aſceticks* too. And ſo witty is the World grown in creating ſins, that they have found out a *ſin of ſelf-denial*. Would God theſe abſurd Mortifiers might be perſwaded to remit ſomewhat of their ſeverity. The moſt rigid *Orders* in Religion have ſtill indulged ſome relaxation ſome times of Feſtivity: Why ſhould Satan's Votaries be ſo much more zealous than God's, as to make their abſtinences ſo perpetual?

7. It ſpeaks indeed the Cruelty of that Maſter they ſerve, but ſo it does his *Policy* alſo. He well knows that if theſe Divine Lights ſhould but inſinuate themſelves, they would ſoon undermine his whole Foundation: So raviſhing and attractive are they, that nothing but a perfect Ignorance of them can be Amulet ſufficient againſt their Charms. And therefore it is his neceſſary concern to keep men from ever taſting of them, the leaſt reliſh whereof would be ſure to make them deſpiſe all his adulterated Delicacies. So we ſee he can give ſome rational account of his part of the matter. But what can men ſay for themſelves, who play his Game for him, even when their own Souls are at the ſtake, that at once renounce that Eternal intereſt, and Preſent pleaſure? This is indeed in *David's* Phraſe, 2 *Sam.* 3.33. *to die as a Fool dieth.* Their hands are not bound, nor their feet put into fetters; no extrinſick hindrance lies on them, why they may not *ſtretch forth their Hand* to this *Tree of Life, and eat and live* happily here and glorioully *for ever*. And yet like *Solomon's* Sluggard, *they hide their hands in their boſom, and will not ſo much as bring them to their mouths*, Prov. 19. 24.

8. This is ſo ſtupid a Folly, as none that pretends to common ſenſe, would in any worldly concernment be guilty of. Will any man renounce a rich unchargeable Reverſion, when he is not only wooed, but bribed by a conſiderable Sum in hand not to diſdain it? I fear there are few ſo *mortified to Wealth*, as to do it upon the ſcore of Self-denial; and ſure no man would be thought in his Wits, that ſhould do it upon any other. For what jealouſies ſoever he had entertained of the Security, or value of that future Eſtate, yet the preſent viſible profit would deſerve his conſideration. There is but one circumſtance imaginable, that could reaſonably avert him, and that is the ſuſpicion of *Deceit*, that the Coyn which is offered him is falſe and adulterate. And that I may not be under a neceſſity of pronouncing ſo many men mad, I ſhall ſuppoſe it not unlikely that this ſcruple may occur to them in the preſent Caſe. They have ſo long brought all their *Bullion* to Satan's Mint, ſuffered him to ſtamp their Pleaſures, that none will now paſs for current with them, which has not his Impreſs: And upon this account 'tis too probable they may diſtruſt the validity of the preſent Payment, disbelieve the pleaſantneſs of thoſe *Duties* I have here recommended to their Enjoyment, as well as Practice. Nor ſhall I deſire to impoſe on their belief, but ſhall very willingly wave their Faith, and appeal to their *Senſe*. But then they muſt remember, that that is uncapable of judging by any other means but *Experience*: And therefore if all that has been addreſt to their *Reaſon* be ineffectual, that remains as the laſt reſerve for their convincement. Let every one of them ſeriouſly and conſcientiouſly ſet to the *Practice*, (and allow only for ſo much of difficulty, as naturally attends the interrupting a contrary Cuſtom) and then let him if he can, doubt of the Pleaſure. Let him allow himſelf but this one *Medium* to infer it, and I ſhall

defie his diſſent to the *Concluſion.* Let him *ſow* with me this handful of Seed *in the Tears* of true Contrition for remembring his Duty and Intereſt ſo late, and I ſhall reſt confident *he will reap in joy* in this World, and carry the news of it to another, even thither alſo *bring his ſheaves with him, abundance of Fruit to his account*, be bleſt here, and crown'd Eternally.

PRIVATE DEVOTIONS.

A CONFESSION.

O BLESSED Lord, I thy wretched Creature, thy not only unprofitable and ſlothful, but wicked Servant, do here proſtrate my ſelf at thy Feet, humbly acknowledging that I have moſt perverſly and moſt treacherouſly miſ-imployed thoſe many precious Talents wherewith thou haſt entruſted me. I have, O Lord, unworthily abuſed thoſe common Mercies which thou haſt afforded me as a Man, and a Chriſtian, my whole life having been a continued reſiſtance to the Dictates both of Reaſon and Religion. But I have yet farther perverted thoſe more ſpecial Liberalities of thine, whereby thou haſt aſſayed to vanquiſh and melt an ungrateful heart. My Knowledge hath had no influence on my Choices, but I have obſtinately purſued thoſe ways, which I knew led to the Chambers of Death, and by advancing my Sins from Ignorances to Preſumptions, hath ſerved only to render me liable to the greater number of ſtripes. That Wealth whereby I ſhould have glorified Thee, and ſuccoured my Brethren, I have converted into fuel to maintain and accend my Covetouſneſs, Pride and Luxury, ſo levying War againſt Thee with thine own Treaſure. Thus unfaithful, O Lord, have I been in the unrighteous Mammon; and who then ſhall commit to my truſt the true Riches? I have waſted that Time thou haſt given me, to work out my own Salvation, vainly and impertinently, nay often ſo viciouſly and impiouſly, that Idleneſs, though a Crying ſin of Sodom, *hath been the ſilenteſt of my guilts, the greater portion of my Days having been devoted either to the purſuit or enjoyment of my brutiſh Pleaſures, ſo making it my buſineſs to provide for the Fleſh to fulfil the Luſts thereof; aud of thoſe many Days and Tears thou haſt afforded me, how few minutes are there of which I can give any tolerable account to Thee, or my own Soul? Nay, O Lord, as if my ſingle and perſonal Impieties had been too little, I have propagated them to others, and have made that Authority and Eſteem, which thou gaveſt me for better purpoſes, the means of enſnaring all whom my Intereſt or Example could ſeduce. And now, O Lord, how unknown aſtoniſhing a weight of guilt do I lie under, that am to anſwer for ſo many Sins of Other men, as well as my ſelf, that have thus been a Snare on* Mizpah, *and a Net ſpread on Mount* Tabor, *the Inſtrument of entangling and betraying ſo many Souls? O merciful Lord, who delighteſt not in the death of a ſinner, look with pity both on them, and me; Give me a ſincere and earneſt Repentance for my own offences, and if it be thy bleſſed Will, make me ſome way inſtrumental to the begetting the like in them, that I may be as con-*

tributive to their Recovery, as I have been to their Fall: And let the conſciouſneſs of my great Sloth and Unfaithfulneſs in all the parts of my Stewardſhip, excite me to a more diligent and induſtrious improvement of all thoſe advantages thou haſt put into my hands, for thy glory, the benefit of my Brethren, and the eternal joy of my own Soul. Grant this, O gracious Lord, for his ſake, who came to call Sinners to Repentance, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

A THANKSGIVING.

O *MOST gracious and moſt bountiful Lord, who doſt good unto all, but haſt in an extraordinary meaſure abounded to me thy unworthieſt Servant. I deſire with all exuberant thankfulneſs of heart, to confeſs and celebrate this thy great goodneſs. Lord, thou haſt not been to me a Wilderneſs, a Land of Darkneſs, but haſt cauſed my Lot to fall in a fair ground. Thou haſt not only given me a Natural, and a capacity of a Spiritual life, but haſt alſo enriched me with many advantages for the comfortable ſupport of the one, and the happy improvement of the other, above what thou affordeſt to multitudes of others. Thou haſt liberally given me of the Dew of Heaven, and fatneſs of the Earth, an aſſurance of all thoſe good things which may both oblige and aſſiſt me chearfully to ſerve Thee. O let not my Heart like* Gideon's *Fleece remain dry, whilſt all about it is thus plentifully watered from Heaven; but give me, I beſeech thee, ſuch a ſenſe of thy Mercy, as may expreſs it ſelf in a conſtant and zealous Obedience. Thou haſt done ſo much for this meaneſt Plant in thy Vineyard, dreſt it and fenced it about with thy Grace and Providence; and having built a Wine-preſs, mayeſt moſt reaſonably expect ſome Cluſters to be brought to it at the Vintage. O let not ſo gracious, ſo equitable a demand be fruſtrated, when thou lookeſt it ſhould bring forth Grapes, let it not bring forth wild Grapes; let not thoſe Advantages I enjoy above others, tempt me to exalt my ſelf, or deſpiſe them, but grant me always to remember that it is thou only that makeſt me differ from another. Lord, let thy Methods be my Documents, thy Diſpenſations of Indulgence towards me, the Engagements and Bands of the cloſeſt and moſt inviolable Duty, that that Eminency of condition wherein thou haſt placed me in this World, may be an effectual Admonition to me to be eminent in Vertue, that Men ſeeing my good Works, may glorifie Thee my Heavenly Father, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and bleſſed Saviour,* Amen.

A PRAYER.

O *THOV moſt Righteous and Impartial Judge, who deſpiſeſt not the mean, nor accepteſt the perſons of the Mighty. Make me always to remember and ſeriouſly to conſider, that none of thoſe outward Privileges I enjoy among men, can exempt me from thy ſevere Tribunal, but that I ſhall one day be brought to Judgment, as for all that I have done in the fleſh, ſo particularly for thoſe ſpecial and peculiar Advantages, whereby thou haſt diſcriminated me from my meaner Brethren: And oh let theſe Terrors of the Lord timely perſwade, yea conſtrain me to a chearful imploying of all I have received, to thoſe ends for which thou haſt beſtowed them. Lord, grant that the Knowledge thou haſt given me, may have ſuch an efficacy on my Practice, that it may always guide, never upbraid me. And as thou haſt opened thy hand wide to me in temporal plenty, ſo* *enlarge my heart in Thankfulneſs toward Thee, and in Compaſſion and Bounty toward thy poor Members: I am not ſtraitned by thee: O let me not be ſtraitned in my own bowels; let neither Covetouſneſs nor Riot make me poor in the midſt of Riches, but grant me that true Enjoyment which conſiſts in a Charitable diſpenſing of them. that forſaking all the unſatisfying nauſeated pleaſures of Luxury, I may purchaſe to my ſelf that more ſolid tranſcending delight of ſuccouring the diſtreſſes of my fellow-Chriſtians. Lord, ſuffer not my wealth to be only a lading with thick Clay, nor the Ruſt of it to bear witneſs againſt me, but rather make me of the number of thoſe that need relief, than of thoſe who want hearts to give it. And ſince in thy gracious Providence thou haſt placed me in a condition of eaſe and vacancy, O let me not pervert it into a life of Idleneſs and Senſuality, let me not be leſs, but better buſied than other men. O never ſuffer me to incur the guilt of reproach of being more remiſs or indifferent in my entercourſe with Thee, than others are of their Traffique with the World, of having leſs care of my own and other men's immortal Souls, than they have of their corruptible bodies; but make me ſo induſtriouſly to husband every minute of that precious Time thou lendeſt me here, as may be in order to a bleſſed Eternity both of my ſelf, and as many more as thou ſhalt put within my reach. O let not any perſons ever have cauſe to accuſe their relation to me, for betraying them to Sin here, or Miſery hereafter; but grant that all that are under my care or power, may receive ſuch wholſom influence from me, as may nouriſh all Chriſtian Practice among them; And, Lord, grant that my Example may be ſuch to all, that I never prove to any an occaſion of Falling: Let me never contribute to that power and empire which vice has gotten in the world, but with a ſteady courage oppoſe all impiety, how cuſtomary or ſucceſsful ſoever; Let me think nothing Honourable, but what bears thy ſtamp and impreſs on it, but engage, and animate, and inflame my benumm'd breaſt, to the moſt eager and vigorous endeavour of recovering diſcountenanc'd Vertue to ſome eſteem and reputation among men And, O Lord, grant that by an aſſiduous Practice of all Duty, I may arrive to ſuch a guſt and reliſh of it, as may utterly ſupplant any ſenſual delights in my own heart, and may alſo qualifie me experimentally to aſſure others how ſweet the Lord is, that I may be an effectual (though unworthy) Inſtrument in thy hand of drawing many to the Obedience of Chriſt, and that renouncing all the vain torturing Ambitions of this World, I may aſpire to no other honour but that of being approved by Thee as a good and faithful Servant; that by thy mercy having my infirmities covered, and my Sincerity accepted, I may at laſt be admitted into the Joy of my Lord, through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt my bleſſed Saviour and Mediator.* Amen.

F I N I S.

THE

LADIES CALLING.

IN TWO PARTS.

⁂

THE

PREFACE.

The Author's deſign in the enſuing Treatiſe.

THO' the ſmalneſs of this Tract will ſcarce juſtify the ſolemnity of a Preface; yet remembring 'tis deſign'd for thoſe who are accuſtomed to Ceremonious Addreſſes, I think it not beſt to approach them too abruptly. And indeed beſides the Civility, there ſeems ſome uſe of it in order to my deſign. To adviſe, or reprove, is ſo ungrateful an office, that he that undertakes it, had need uſe all previous arts to vindicate the ſincerity of his purpoſe, and to convince the perſon admoniſhed, that 'tis neither ſpleen nor prejudice, but the moſt real exuberant kindneſs which prompts him to inflict thoſe wounds of a friend, *Prov.* 27. 6. *and that he is never leſs* an enemy, than when he thus tells them the truth, *Gal.* 4. 16. *Therefore tho' they may in the enſuing leaves meet with ſome things which may have a ſhew of ſeverity, yet let me aſſure my Reader, they have indeed a deſign of the greateſt ſervice, by correcting the extravagance of ſome, to reſcue the whole Sex, as from the contagion of the example, ſo from the community of the blame. For ſuch is either the inadvertence, or malice of a great part of mankind, that (againſt all rules of Diſcourſe) they deduce generals from particulars, make every woman ſo far an* Eve, *that her depravation ſhall forfeit her whole kind; and becauſe there are fooliſh and ſcandalous women, will ſcarce allow there are any other.*

The contempt which men have entertain'd of the female Sex, comes from their unworthy ends upon them.

The truth is, the Error ſeems in many Men to be affected; they propoſe to themſelves unworthy ends on Women, and make all their obſervations wholly in order to thoſe. He that is upon a bad purſuit, takes particular notice of all that he thinks for his turn; the reſt fall not within his ſphere: and 'tis too probable he is ſo abundantly ſupplied for that abſolute conſideration, that he never deſcends to the comparative. Nay, perhaps there may be yet a deeper Original of the ſcandal: the World is much governed by eſtimation: and as Applauſe encourages and exalts, ſo an univerſal Contemt debaſes and dejects the Spirit. If it can paſs once into a Maxim, that

Women are ſuch ſilly or vicious Creatures, it may put fair for the making them ſo indeed. Themſelves may imbibe the common Opinion, charge all their Perſonal Faults on their Sex, think that they do but their kind, when indeed they moſt contradict it, and no more aſpire to any thing worthy, than a man can pretend to the Excellencies of an Angel. And indeed this ſeems to be the practical inference of ſome Women, who could hardly have deſcended to ſuch Diſhonours, had they not before been as vile in their own Eyes, as they have afterwards rendred themſelves in others.

'Twill be a charitable ſervice to the female Sex, to acquaint them with their own value.

It may therefore upon this account be a neceſſary Charity to the Sex, to acquaint them with their own Value, animate them to ſome higher thought of themſelves; not to yield their Suffrage to thoſe injurious Eſtimates the World hath made of them, and from a ſuppoſed Incapacity of Nobler things, to neglect the purſuit of them; from which God and Nature have no more precluded the Feminine, than the Maſculine part of Mankind.

They have a powerful influence on all public tranſactions.

In reference to Secular Conſiderations, their advantages are moſt important; Women have a very powerful influence upon all ſort of Tranſactions in the World: the engaging of Delilah, and plowing with the heifer, Judg. 14, and 16. being ever the ſureſt way to undermine the Councels, and maſter the Force of the ſtouteſt Samſon. And accordingly Hiſtories of all kinds aſſure us that the Gyneceum had ſtill had a Rival Suffrage with the Senate. I might urge the more regular Powers which appertain unto that Sex: that all mankind is the Pupil and Diſciple of Female-Inſtitution: the Daughters till they write Women, and the Sons till the firſt ſeven years be paſt; the time when the mind is moſt ductile, and prepar'd to receive impreſſion, being wholly in the Care and Conduct of the Mother. And whereas 'tis obſerv'd by Ariſtotle in his Politics, (and is a proof of his being as Wiſe, as he was Learned a Man) that the Eſtate of Republics entirely hangs on private Families, the little Monarchies both compoſing and giving Law unto the great; 'tis evident that the diſpoſal of Families and all domeſtic Concerns therein lies chiefly on the Wife; whence the ſame Ariſtotle declares, that the Spartans notwithſtanding their ready addreſs to Empire by their great Frugality, Induſtry, and Military Vertue, could have but half a Happineſs, as failing on the part of their Wives. But waving theſe reflections, I ſhall fix only on the Perſonal Accompliſhments of the Sex, and peculiarly that which is the moſt principal Endowment of the Rational Nature, I mean their Underſtanding. Where firſt it will be a little hard to pronounce, that they are naturally inferior to Men; when 'tis conſider'd how much of extrinſic weight is put in the ballance to turn it on the Mens ſide. Men have their parts cultivated and improved by Education, refined and ſubtilized by Learning and Arts, are like an incloſed piece of a Common, which by Induſtry and Husbandry becomes a different thing from the reſt, tho' the natural Turf own'd no ſuch inequality. And truly had Women the ſame Advantage, I dare not ſay but they would make as good returns of it; ſome of thoſe few that have been tried, have been eminent in ſeveral parts of Learning. To omit the modern inſtances, Theano after the death of Pythagoras kept up his School; Socrates confeſſes himſelf to have been inſtructed not only in Rhetoric by Aſpatia, but even in the higheſt Points of Philoſophy by Diotime. The Roman Story informs us of the deep wiſdom of Tanaquil, Cornelia, Livia, to paſs by others. And were we ſure they would have ballaſt to their ſails, have humility enough to poiſe them againſt the vanity of Learning, I ſee not why they might no more frequently be entruſted with it; for if they could be ſecur'd againſt this weed, doubtleſs the ſoil is rich enough to bear a good crop.

But not to oppoſe a receiv'd opinion, let it be admitted, that in reſpect of their intellects they are below men; yet ſure in the ſublimeſt part of humanity, they are their equals: they have Souls of as divine an Original, as endleſs of Duration, and as capable of infinite Beatitude. That ſpiritual Eſſence, that ray of Divinity owns no diſtinction of Sexes; ſo that in this ſenſe alſo, that Aphoriſm of the Apoſtle holds good, there is neither Male nor Female, but all are one, *Gal.* 3. 28. *And ſure there is the one tranſcendent Excellency of Human Nature. For alas, what value can comparatively be ſet upon all other Qualifications, which will finally leave us but like the Beaſts that periſh? And this, as it is the higheſt pitch of their worth, ſo it is the ſafeſt ſubject of their Contemplation: other knowledge, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks,* 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. may puff up, *this only will* edify.

If they have diſadvantage in reference to their intellectuals, in reſpect of men, their ſouls are equal, and alike capable of grace & glory.

As therefore when we would pride our ſelves, we uſe not to boaſt our meaner, but our beſt qualities: ſo let me ſolicite Ladies to be ſo juſt to themſelves, as not to take their own meaſures by any thing below this. Why ſhould they take ſo low a level of Greatneſs, as to value themſelves upon a title which is but a bigger blaſt of air, when they may derive their deſcent from above the Stars, claim cognation with Divinity? Why ſhould they dote on the fictitious image of a perhaps more fictitious beauty, which their glaſs preſents them, when they need but look inward to ſee an infinitely fairer Idea, an emanation of the eternal Brightneſs? Indeed did they make a juſt eſtimate of themſelves in this reſpect, it would overwhelm the vanity of thoſe inferior things wherein they now have ſuch complacency, nor would they ſuffer their nobler part to be affronted by the unequal competition of their meaner.

And here Ladies ſhould place their value of themſelves.

But *there is alſo another conſequent which would flow from that eſteem; they would ſollicitouſly preſerve what they ſo highly prize, it being natural for us to proportion our care to our value. They would be jealouſly vigilant againſt every thing, that might eclipſe the radiancy or contaminate the purity of their ſouls. 'Twas the advice of a Heathen moraliſt,* Revere thy ſelf; *and 'twas very wholſome counſel: for next our due veneration to God, a reverence to our ſelves is the moſt ſevere controler of all exorbitancies. How can a ſoul that remembers its celeſtial extraction, wallow it ſelf in the mire, ſtoop to any ſordid degenerous practices? 'Tis ſaid of* Themiſtocles, *that ſeeing once a rich booty about the dead corpſes of his enemies, he toucht it not, but pointing to another, ſaid, Take thou that, for thou art not* Themiſtocles. *If then a little military fame could ſo elevate his thoughts, 'tis a ſhame that any who carry an immortal ſpirit about them, ſhould not be raiſed above all the contemptible baits of this ſublunary world. Why ſhould they not with the like diſdain turn over all ſenſual inordinances to mere Animals, and creatures that have no higher principle than that of ſenſe, whilſt themſelves ſoar up to the more ſublimated* pleaſures, which are at God's right Hand for evermore, *Pſal.* 16. 12.

Such a value would produce ſolicitude and vigilance, to preſerve what we prize.

We may therefore conclude, that whatever vicious impotence Women are under, it is acquired, not natural; nor derived from any illiberality of Gods, but from the ill managery of his Bounty. He has placed within them a Pillar of Cloud and Fire, ſufficient to ſhelter and conduct them thro' all the ſtorms, all the intricacies that can occur in their journey to Canaan; *if they will forget that more intrinſic part of their Being, live as if they were all body, reject the Manna, and rave after the Quails; that deſtruction which will thereby be induced, they muſt own to ſpring from themſelves Let them not charge God fooliſhly, or think that by making them*

Whatever vicious impotence Women are under, it is acquir'd, not natural.

them women, he neceſſitated them to be proud, or wanton, vain or peeviſh; ſince 'tis manifeſt he made them to better purpoſes, was not partial to the other Sex, but that having as the Prophet ſpeaks, abundance of ſpirit, Mal. 2. he equally diſpenc'd it, and gave the feebleſt woman as large and capacious a Soul as that of the Greateſt Heroe.

As to eternal intereſts Women ſeem placed in the moſt advantageous circumſtances.

Nay give me leave to ſay farther, that as to an Eternal well being, he ſeems to have placed them in more advantageous circumſtances than he has done men. He has planted in them ſome native propenſions, which (as I ſhall hereafter have occaſion to obſerve) do much facilitate the operations of grace upon them. Beſides, there are many temptations to which men are expos'd, that are out of their road. How hard is it for a man to converſe in the world, but he ſhall be importun'd to debauchery and exceſs, muſt forfeit his ſobriety to maintain the reputation of a ſociable Perſon? Again, how liable are they by a promiſcuous converſation among variety of humors, to meet with affronts, which the Maxims of Honor will tell them muſt (in ſpight of all Chriſt's interdicts) be reveng'd? And thus engages them in Quarrels, ſometimes in Murders. Now none of theſe are incident to women: they muſt in theſe and ſome other inſtances attaque temptation, violently raviſh guilt, and abandon their Sex, the whole Oeconomy of their eſtate, e're they can diveſt themſelves of their innocency. So that God ſeems in many particulars to have cloſelier fenced them in, and not left them to thoſe wilder excurſions, for which the cuſtomary liberties of the other Sex afford a more open way. In ſhort, they have ſo many advantages towards Vertue, that tho' the Philoſopher made it one of his ſolemn acknowledgements to God, that he had made him a man, not a woman: yet I think Chriſtian women have now reaſon enough to invert that form, and to thank God that made them women, and not men.

Examples of eminent vertue and piety in Women.

But we know advantages which are only in ſpeculation, are lookt on with ſome diffidence, till there have bin ſome practical experiments made of them; I ſhall therefore evidence the problem by demonſtration and inſtance; deſiring my Readers to meaſure the poſſibilities of their arriving to eminent degrees of Vertue and Piety, by what others have attained to. I ſhall not fetch examples of Morality from heathen women, becauſe I am now upon an higher ſtrain; (yet many ſuch might be brought to the reproach of many Women, who pretending to more, fall infinitly ſhort of that:) 'tis Chriſtian Vertue that I am now recommending, and which has bin eminently exemplified in many of their Sex. How many Women do we read of in the Goſpel, who in all the duties of aſſiduous attendance on Chriſt, liberalities of love and reſpect, nay even in zeal and courage, ſurpaſſed even the Apoſtles themſelves? We find his Croſs ſurrounded, his Paſſion celebrated by the avowed tears and lamentations of devout women, when the moſt ſanguine of his Diſciples had denied, yea forſwore, and all had forſaken him. Nay, even Death it ſelf could not extinguiſh their love; we find the devout Maries deſigning a laborious, chargeable, and perhaps hazardous reſpect to his Corps. And accordingly, 'tis a memorable atteſtation Chriſt gives to their Piety, by making them the firſt witneſſes of his Reſurrection, the prime Evangeliſts to proclame thoſe great Tidings; and as a Learned man ſpeaks, Apoſtles to the Apoſtles. Nor is the devotion of that Sex to be found only in the ſacred Records; the Primitive times have left us many Memorials of the like, and the Martyrologies are full of Female ſufferers of all ages and conditions, who by the fervor of their Zeal had overcome the timorouſneſs of their Nature, and wearied the cruelty of their Perſecutors. And as Women helpt to *augment the number of Martyrs, ſo did they of Confeſſors alſo, in a ſtout owning, and diligent practice of Chriſtianity. Queens and Empreſſes knew no Title ſo Glorious as that of a nurſing Mother to the Church, have often exchanged their Palaces for little Cells and Oratories, and valued not their own Diadems in compariſon with their Saviors Crown of Thorns. And tho' by a perpetual declination from that priſtine Zeal, the inſtances have in every age grown leſs numerous, yet none has wanted ſome very illuſtrious Examples. Nay even in our dregs of time, in this common decay of all good, there are, I doubt not, many who (according to their opportunities) tranſcribe the former Copies, live like People that know they muſt live hereafter, and preſent us yet with ſome ſpecimen of ancient Vertue. Nay to ſpeak an impartial Truth, 'tis not to be denied, but the reputation of Religion is more kept up by women than men, many of the one countenancing it by their Practice, whereas more of the other do not only neglect but decry it. And now ſince Women are compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, who by doing the thing give the ſureſt evidence that 'tis not unfeaſible, why ſhould any plead an impoſſibility? In matters of Vanity and Pomp they are not ſo eaſily diſheartned, no pattern of that kind can be ſet, which will not be induſtriouſly imitated; nay in the greateſt inequality of materials for it. Why then ſhould their emulation leave them, where only it could do them good? How comes it, that of thoſe who have equal Principles of a ſpiritual Being, ſome live according to the Dignity of it; and others who ſee them do ſo, do yet live as if they aſſented to that Philoſophers Paradox, who ſaid Women had no ſouls; or at leaſt were of the Pythagorean Sect, and lookt upon themſelves only as the Jails and Priſons of former offending Spirits, which they reſolv'd to fit for a yet viler tranſmigration; give them the appetites of Beaſts before they aſſume the Bodies. This is indeed an unlucky Humility, that thoſe who in all other inſtances are apt to overween, ſhould here ſink ſo much below themſelves. And I hope 'twill not appear an uncivil addreſs, to perſwade them to a juſter eſtimate of their own worth. And if what has bin ſaid to that end may have any effect, I ſhall not deſire a better Preparation to the enſuing Tract; ſince ſhe that duly conſiders her own capacity of Eternal Bliſs, and withall, the poſſibility of as endleſs a Miſery, according as ſhe performs or neglects the ſeveral Parts of Duty, will ſure need no other incentive to the diligent Purſuit of it.*

THE
Ladies Calling.

PART I. SECT. I.

Of Modeſty.

The writing of the Gentleman's Calling, dos not ſuperſede an addreſs to the other Sex.

1. IT is now many years ſince an Addreſs was made to the Gentry of this Nation, to perſwade them to that Virtue which would be both their Pleaſure and Reward. I cannot, I confeſs, boaſt any ſuch effect of that, as ſhould much inſpirit the hopes of a new Attempt; yet ſince we ſee in our proper ſecular Concerns, Defeats do many times animate no leſs than Succeſs, I know not why in this more charitable deſign I ſhould ſit down diſcouraged. Men uſually raiſe not a Siege upon the firſt repulſe, but reinforce their Batteries, obſerve more curiouſly which are the moſt aſſailable, acceſſible parts, and accordingly diſpoſe their aſſault: it will be then no unreaſonable imitation in the preſent caſe, if after a ſucceſleſs attempt upon the more impregnable Maſculine part of the Gentry, I now aſſay the Feminine, whoſe native ſoftneſs and Gentleneſs may render them leſs apt for the reſiſtance of Good Counſel, wherein too many men place their Gallantry.

Many duties are common to both.

2. I preſume thoſe to whom that little Tract was at firſt deſign'd, will be ſo willing to relinquiſh their Title, that I might without imputation of Robbery, exchange my Patrons, and by a new Dedication ſuperſede the labour of a new Book. And indeed, ſince what was there ſaid was founded more on the diſtinction of qualities than of Sex, there would not need many razures to render it as proper for one as the other; and I ſhall take ſo much advantage of it, as to aſſure the Female Gentry, that they may there find much of the duty incumbent on them, in reſpect of that Rank and Condition they hold in the world: and therefore, though I ſhall ſometimes make ſome reflections on it; yet as to the main, I ſhall think it the eaſieſt courſe, as well for them as my ſelf, to direct them thither.

The peculiar to the latter, are here intended to be treated of.

3. But it may ſeem to have too much of the Pedant, to entertain new Scholars only with the caſt or nauſeated learning of the old; and when I remember I write to Ladys, who uſe to think the newneſs of any thing a conſiderable addition to its value; I conceive my ſelf oblig'd as well in Civility to their humour, as Charity to their needs, to give them ſomething which they may own as their Peculiar. And to render it the more unalienable I ſhall affix it to their Sex; and make it the ſubject of my preſent Inquiſition, what in reſpect of that are the proper and diſtinct Obligations, under which by the aſſignment of God and Nature they are placed.

Such virtues, as with ſome propriety may be ſtiled feminine.

4. That the obligation to moral and Chriſtian Virtues is in it ſelf univerſal, and not confin'd to any Sex or Perſon, is not to be denied: yet as in human Conſtitutions there are often Precepts, which (tho' not excluſive of any, do yet) more peculiarly and eminently level at ſome particular Rank or order of men; ſo in the laws of God and nature, there appears the like diſtinction. That All-wiſe Creator, who hath put peculiar Proprieties and inclinations into his Creatures, hath accordingly deſign'd their actuating and improving them: and altho' in mankind, which differs not in ſpecies but in gender, the variety may ſeem leſs; yet there is ſtill enough to found ſome diverſity, either in the kind or degree of duty. This ſure is ſhadowed to us in that particular caution given to the Jews, not to confound the habit of the ſeveral Sexes, *Deut.* 22. 5. and yet more clearly evidenced in the Precept which the Apoſtles addreſs to women, 1 *Tim.* 2. 9. and 1 *Pet.* 3. 3. Nay, this is ſo granted a Truth, that all Ages and Nations have made ſome diſtinction between Maſculine and Feminine Virtues, Nature having not only given a diſtinction as to the Beauties of their outward Form, but alſo in their very mould and conſtitution implanted peculiar Aptneſſes and Proprieties of mind, which accordingly vary the meaſure of Decency; that being comely for the one Sex, which often is not (at leaſt in the ſame degree) for the other. It will therefore be no abſurd attempt to decipher thoſe Excellencies, which are the genuine and proper Ornaments of Women: which tho' in ſome inſtances they may perhaps prove coincident with thoſe of Men; yet even thoſe which are equally incluſive of both, by the Divine Command may have ſome additional weight on the Female ſide, in reſpect of Decency, Fame, or ſome other (not deſpicable) conſideration.

Of theſe, ſome virtues belong to all; others have a reſpect to ſeveral ſtates of life.

5. For the better directing our preſent Inquiſition, it will be moſt regular, firſt to enquire what thoſe Virtues are, which are univerſally neceſſary to Women in all Ages and Circumſtances of their lives: ſuch which, like the firſt matter, are prerequir'd for all forms; which, like a firm and ſolid Baſis, muſt ſupport all various Events, all changes of their Condition or Relations. And ſecondly, we ſhall conſider them in thoſe changes; trace them thro' the ſeveral Stages and Periods of Life, thro' thoſe ſeveral States which create the moſt conſiderable mutations to them, and in each of thoſe conſider, what are the new and proportionate Acceſſions of Duty.

Some alſo are of greater, others of leſs importance.

6. As in the outward Accommodations of Life, the things of moſt daily and indiſpenſable uſe deſerve the greateſt Value; ſo in Moral or Divine Endowments, the benefit of poſſeſſing is beſt meaſured by the miſery of wanting them. This firſt rank therefore of Female Virtues, which we are to treat of, will have that to recommend them; they being ſo ſtrictly neceſſary, that their abſence is not only a privative ill, but alſo expoſes to a deluge of all poſitive miſchiefs conſequent to [illegible] privation.

The leading feminine virtue is modeſty: which appears firſt in the look.

7. This will be found true in all the ſeverals we are to [illegible] but in none more eminently, than in that we ſhall chuſe to begin with, the Virtue of Modeſty; which may be conſidered in a double notion, the one as it is oppoſed to Boldneſs and Indecency; the other to Lightneſs and Wantonneſs. In the firſt Acception *Zeno* has not ill defin'd it, to be *the Science of Decent Motion,* it being that which guides & regulates the whole Behaviour, checks and controles all rude Exorbitances, and is the great Civilizer of converſation. It is indeed a Virtue of a general Influence; do's not only ballaſt the mind with ſober and humble thoughts of ones ſelf, but alſo ſteers every part of the outward frame. It appears in the

face in calm and meek looks, where it ſo impreſſes it ſelf, that it ſeems thence to have acquir'd the name of ſhamefac'dneſs. Certainly (whatever the modern opinion is) there is nothing gives a greater luſtre to a Feminine Beauty: ſo that St. *Paul* ſeems not ill to have conſulted their Concerns in that Point, when he ſubſtitutes that as a ſuppletory Ornament to *the deckings of Gold and Pearl and coſtly Aray*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 9. But I fear this now will be thought too antiquated a dreſs, and an Apoſtle be eſteemed no competent Judge in this Science; which is now become ſo ſolemn a thing, that certainly no Academy in the World can vie numbers with the Students of this Myſtery. Yet when they have ſtrain'd their Art to the higheſt Pitch; an innocent Modeſty, and native ſimplicity of Look, ſhall eclipſe their Glaring Splendor, and triumph over their Artificial Handſomneſs: on the other ſide, let a Woman be decked with all the embelliſhments of Art, nay and care of Nature too, yet if Boldneſs be to be read in her Face, it blots all the lines of Beauty, is like a cloud over the Sun, intercepts the view of all that was otherwiſe Amiable, and renders its blackneſs the more obſervable, by being plac'd near ſomewhat that was apt to attract the eyes.

Next in the words.

8. But Modeſty confines not it ſelf to the Face, ſhe is there only in ſhadow and effigie; but is in life and motion in the Words, whence ſhe baniſhes all Indecency and Rudeneſs, all inſolent Vauntings, and ſupercilious Diſdains, and whatever elſe may render a Perſon troubleſom, or ridiculous to the company. Nor do's ſhe only refine the Language, but ſhe tunes it too, modulates the tone and accent, admits no unhandſom earneſtneſs, or loudneſs of Diſcourſe, the latter whereof was thought ſo indecent in *Carneades*, (tho' in his publick Lectures) that the Gymnaſiarch reproved him for it. And ſure if 'twere not allowable in a Philoſopher in his Schole, 'twill leſs become a woman in ordinary converſe; and if we conſult *Prov.* 7. 11. and 9. we ſhall find loudneſs and clamour in women coupled with ſuch other epithets, as will ſurely not much recommend it. A woman's tongue ſhould indeed be like the imaginary Muſick of the Spheres, ſweet and charming, but not to be heard at a diſtance.

Not only in the manner, but alſo meaſure of ſpeaking.

9. And as Modeſty preſcribes the manner, ſo it do's alſo the meaſure of ſpeaking; reſtrains all exceſſive talkativeneſs, a fault incident to none but the bold; the monopolizing of Diſcourſe being one of the greateſt aſſumings imaginable, and ſo rude an impoſing upon the company, that there can ſcarce be a greater indecency in converſation. This is ingeniouſly expreſt by our Divine Poet *Herbert*,

> *A Civil Gueſt*
> *Will no more talk all, than eat all the Feaſt.*

He that engroſſes the talk, enforces ſilence upon the reſt, and ſo is preſumed to look on them only as his Auditors and Pupils, whilſt he magiſteriouſly dictates to them: which gave occaſion to *Socrates* to ſay, *It is arrogance to ſpeak all, and to be willing to hear nothing.* It is indeed univerſally an inſolent unbecoming thing, but moſt peculiarly ſo in a woman.

Speaking in publick has been in all ſtates interdicted women.

10. The ancient Romans thought it ſo much ſo, that they allowed not that Sex to ſpeak publickly, tho' it were in their own neceſſary defence; inſomuch that when *Ameſia* ſtood forth to plead her own cauſe in the Senate, they lookt on it as ſo prodigious a thing, that they ſent to conſult

the Oracle what it portended to the State. And tho' theſe firſt ſeverities were ſoon loſt in the ſucceſſes of that Empire, *Valerius Maximus* could find but two more, whoſe either neceſſity or impudence, perſwaded them to repeat this unhandſome attempt.

And by St. Paul *in the Chriſtian Church.*

11. And this great indecency of Loquacity in Women, I am willing to hope is the reaſon why that Sex is ſo generally charged with it; not that they are all guilty, but that when they are, it appears ſo unhandſome, as makes it the more eminent and remarkable. Whether it were from that ungracefulneſs of the thing, or from the propenſion Women have to it, I ſhall not determine; but we find the Apoſtle very earneſt in his cautions againſt it, 1 *Cor.* 14. 35. He expreſly enjoins Women to *keep ſilence in the Church,* where he affirms it a ſhame for them to ſpeak: and tho' this ſeems only reſtrain'd to the Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies, yet even ſo it reaches home to the gifted Women of our age, who take upon them to be Teachers; whereas he allowed them not to ſpeak in the Church, no not in order to learning, tho' a more modeſt deſign than that of teaching. But beſides this, he has a more indefinite preſcription of ſilence to Women, 1 *Tim.* 2. 11. *Let women learn in ſilence*; and again v. 12. *to be in ſilence.* The Apoſtle ſeems to ground the Phraſe, not only on the inferiority of the woman in regard of the creation and firſt ſin, v. 13, 14. but alſo on the preſumption that they needed inſtruction, towards which, ſilence has always been reckoned an indiſpenſible qualification, the introductory precept in all Scholes, as that wherein all attention is founded. If ſome women of our age think they have outgon that novice ſtate the Apoſtle ſuppoſes, and want no teaching; I muſt crave leave to believe, they want that very firſt Principle which ſhould ſet them to learn, *viz.* the knowledge of their own ignorance: a ſcience which ſo grows with ſtudy and conſideration, that *Socrates* after a long life ſpent in purſuit of Wiſdom, gave this as the ſum of his learning, *This only I know, that I know nothing.* This proficiency ſeems much wanting to our female Talkers, who, in this, ſeem to confute the common Maxim, and give what they have not, by making their ignorance viſible to others, tho' it be undiſcernible to themſelves: and to ſuch we may not unfitly apply the Sarcaſm of *Zeno* to a talkative Youth: *their ears are faln into their tongue.*

So alſo the being tatlers.

12. But beſides this aſſuming ſort of talkativeneſs, there is another uſually charged upon the Sex, a mere chatting, pratling humour, which maintains it ſelf at the coſt of their neighbours, and can never want ſupplies as long as there is any body within the reach of their obſervation. This I would fain hope is moſt the vice of the vulgar ſort of Women, the education of the Nobler ſetting them above thoſe mean entertainments. Yet when 'tis remembred that St. *Paul,* 1 *Tim.* 5. 13. makes Tatling the effect of Idleneſs, it may not unreaſonably be feared, that where there is moſt of the Cauſe, there will be ſome of the effect. And indeed, it would puzzle one to conjecture, how that round of formal Viſits among Perſons of Quality ſhould be kept up without this. That their Viſits ſhould be only a dumb Shew, none will ſuſpect among women; and when the unfaſhionable themes of Houſwifery, Piety, &c. are excluded, there will not remain many Topicks of diſcourſe, unleſs this be called in to ſupply. And this indeed is a moſt inexhauſtible reſerve, it having ſo many ſprings to feed it, that 'tis ſcarce poſſible it ſhould fail. And when 'tis farther conſidered, how apt a miniſter it is to Envy, Spleen, Revenge, and other feminine Paſſions, we cannot ſuppoſe it can be unacceptable where any of thoſe bear ſway. But I believe it is not more frequently introduc'd by any thing than

the vanity of Wit, which has no where a more free and exorbitant range than in cenſuring and deriding; nay, finds not only Exerciſe but Triumph too, vain Perſons ſeldom conſidering the Infirmities or Follies of others, without ſome Complacences, and aſſuming reflections on themſelves; which how unagreeable it renders this liberty of talking to that Modeſty we recommend, is obvious enough. And would God 'twere only oppoſite to that; but it is no leſs ſo to all the Obligations of Juſtice and Charity alſo, which are ſcarce ſo frequently violated by any thing, as by this licentiouſneſs of the tongue.

A conſequent of talkativeneſs is revealing ſecrets.

13. There is yet another vice of it, for which the female Sex has been generally accus'd, and that is revealing of ſecrets: an infirmity preſum'd ſo incident to them, that *Ariſtotle* is ſaid to have made it one of the three things he ſolemnly repented of, that he had ever truſted a Secret with a Woman. But by how much the greater prejudice they lie under in this reſpect, the greater ought to be their caution to vindicate not only their Perſons but their Sex, from the imputation, which is indeed extreamly reproachful: this blabbing humour being a ſymptom of a looſe, impotent ſoul, a kind of incontinence of the mind, that can retain nothing committed to it; but as if that alſo had its Diabetick paſſion, perpetually and almoſt inſenſibly evacuating all. And indeed however we are willing to appropriate this to the Sex, yet the fault is owing only to this ill conſtitution of the mind, which is oft-times no leſs viſible in men; as on the contrary, thoſe women who by reaſon and virtue have acquir'd a Solidity and Firmneſs of mind, are as ſure repoſitories of a ſecret, as the moſt maſculine confident: and ſuch I have no intent to involve in this charge, but rather by propoſing their example to the reſt, ſhew that nature has put them under no fatal neceſſity of being thus impotent. A ſecret is no ſuch unruly thing, but it may be kept in: they may take the wiſe man's word for it, *Ecclus.* 19. 10. *If thou haſt heard a word, let it die with thee, and be bold, it will not burſt thee.*

Confident talking is unhappily miſtaken for good breeding.

14. This is a piece of daring manlineſs, which they may affect without breach of Modeſty; would God they would take it in exchange for that virile Boldneſs, which is now too common among many even of the beſt Rank. Such a degenerous age do we now live in, that every thing ſeems inverted, even Sexes; whilſt men fall to the Effeminacy and Niceneſs of women, and women take up the Confidence, the Boldneſs of men, and this too under the notion of good Breeding. A bluſh (tho' formerly reputed the colour of Virtue) is accounted worſe manners than thoſe things which ought to occaſion it, and ſuch as nothing but the ſimplicity of a Country Girl can excuſe. But the infirmity for the moſt part proves very corrigible; a few weeks of the Town Diſcipline wears of that piece of Ruſticity, and advances them to a modiſh Aſſurance. Nor is that deſign'd to terminate in it ſelf, but it is to carry them on, till they arrive to a perfect Metamorphoſis, their Geſture, their Language, nay ſometimes their Habit too being affectedly maſculine; ſo that what *Tacitus* ſpeaks of *Vitellius* in relation to his being a Prince, we may apply to them, and ſay, that *if others did not remember them to be women, themſelves could eaſily forget it.*

Which advances to ranting and ſwearing.

15. Yet were this affectation confin'd only to the more innocent indifferent things, 'twere more tolerable; but alas! it extends farther, and there are women who think they have not made a ſufficient eſcape from their ſex, 'till they have aſſumed the Vices of men too. A ſober modeſt Dialect is too effeminate for them: a bluſtring ranting ſtile is taken up, and (to ſhew them proficients in it) adorn'd with all the Oaths and Imprecations their

their memory or invention can ſupply: as if they meant to vindicate their ſex from the imputation of Timerouſneſs by daring God Almighty. 'Tis true indeed, an Oath ſounds gratingly out of whatever mouth, but out of a woman's it hath ſuch an uncouth harſhneſs, that there is no noiſe on this ſide Hell can be more amazingly odious; Yet this is a muſick this diſcordant age hath introduc'd, no former having I think ever heard it in places at all civiliz'd. So that the Female ſwearers want that poor ſhadow of excuſe the men pretend to, it having been ſo far from cuſtomary, that the unwontedneſs could not but force them to ſome induſtry and pains, e're they could acquire the habit, and ſet up for female Hectors; an eſſay, wherein they have been very kind to the maſculine, by ſhewing the world there can be ſomething worſe.

And alſo drinking and proſtitute lewdneſs.

16. 'Tis ſaid there want not ſome who compleat the demonſtration by the other parallel quality of Drinking alſo; a vice deteſtable in all, but prodigious in women, who put a double violence upon their nature, the one in the intemperance, the other in the immodeſty. And tho' they may take their immediate copy from men, yet (to the praiſe of their proficiency) they outdo their Exemplar and draw near the Original: nothing human being ſo much a beaſt as a drunken woman. This is evident enough if we look only on the meer ſurface of the crime; but if we dive farther into its inferences and adherences, the affirmation is yet more irrefragable. She who is firſt a proſtitute to Wine, will ſoon be to Luſt alſo: ſhe has diſmiſt her Guards, diſcarded all the ſuggeſtions of reaſon, as well as Grace; and is at the mercy of any, of every aſſailant. And when we conſider how much fuller the world is of *Amnons* than of *Joſephs*, it will not be hard to gueſs the fate of that woman's Chaſtity, which has no other bottom than that of mens. So that unleſs her vice ſecure her virtue, and the loathſomneſs of the one prevent attempts on the other, 'tis ſcarce imaginable a woman that looſes her Sobriety ſhould keep her Honeſty. So that indeed I might more properly have made this reflection when I come to ſpeak of Modeſty in the ſecond notion of it, as it is oppos'd to Lightneſs and Wantonneſs, but it falls not much amiſs now, to be the introduction to it.

Of Modeſty in behaviour.

17. And if we conſider Modeſty in this ſenſe, we ſhall find it the moſt indiſpenſible requiſite of a woman; a thing ſo eſſential and natural to the ſex, that every the leaſt declination from it, is a proportionable receding from Womanhood, but the total abandoning it ranks them among Brutes, nay ſets them as far beneath thoſe, as an acquir'd vileneſs is below a native. I need make no collection of the verdicts either of the Philoſophers or Divines in the caſe, it being ſo much an inſtinct of nature, that tho' too many make a ſhift to ſuppreſs it in themſelves, yet they cannot ſo darken the notion in others, but that an Impudent woman is lookt on as a kind of Monſter, a thing diverted and diſtorted from its proper form. That there is indeed a ſtrange repugnancy to nature, needs no other evidence than the ſtrugling and difficulty in the firſt violations of Modeſty, which always begin with regrets and bluſhes, and require a great deal of Self-denial, much of vicious Fortitude, to encounter with the recoilings and upbraidings of their own minds.

Guarded by natural baſhfulneſs.

18. I make no doubt but this age has arriv'd to as compendious arts of this kind, as induſtrious vice can ſuggeſt, and we have but too many inſtances of early proficients in this learning; yet I dare appeal even to the forwardeſt of them, whether at firſt they could not with more eaſe have kept their virtue than loſt it. Certainly ſuch are the Horrours and Shames that precede thoſe firſt Guilts, that they muſt commit a rape upon them-

ſelves (force their own reluctances and averſions) before they can become willing proſtitutes to others. This their Seducers ſeem well to underſtand, and upon that ſcore are at the pains of ſo many preparatory courtings, ſuch expenſe of preſents too; as if this were ſo uncouth a crime, that there were no hope to introduce it but by a confederacy of ſome more familiar vices, their Pride or Covetouſneſs.

The beſt way to ſecure the Fort of Modeſty, is to preſerve the Outworks.

19. The beſt way therefore to countermine thoſe Stratagems of men, is for women to be ſuſpiciouſly vigilant even of the firſt approaches. He that means to defend a Fort, muſt not abandon the Outworks, and ſhe that will ſecure her Chaſtity, muſt never let it come to too cloſe a ſiege, but repel the very firſt and moſt remote inſinuations of a Tempter. Therefore when we ſpeak of Modeſty in our preſent notion of it, we are not to oppoſe it only to the groſſer act of Incontinency, but to all thoſe misbehaviours, which either diſcover or may create an inclination to it; of which ſort is all Lightneſs of carriage, wanton glances, obſcene diſcourſe; things that ſhew a woman ſo weary of her honour, that the next comer may reaſonably ſuſpect a ſurrender, and conſequently be invited to the Aſſault. Indeed they are ſuch, that one would rather think them the reſult of many acts, than merely the Prologue to one; and that nothing but a cuſtom of private ſin, could ſupply impudence enough to do what is ſo publickly ſcandalous; and where this is found in thoſe of any conſiderable age, charity it ſelf can ſcarce paſs a milder cenſure. Yet poſſibly in thoſe of the youngeſt ſort, they may at firſt be taken up (as their dreſs is) merely in imitation of others, embrac'd implicitly upon the authority of thoſe, whoſe examples govern the modes. When a poor girle, who has ſtill ſo much of the child as to admire every thing that glitters, ſees theſe things uſed by the gay people of the world, 'tis no wonder if ſhe take theſe as part of their accompliſhments, and upon peril of that formidable calamity of being unfaſhionable, conform to them. Which yet do's not ſo much extenuate the guilt of thoſe few ſeduced perſons, as it aggravates that of the Seducers, and atteſts the ſtrange corruption of the age, that thoſe things which the leſs hardned ſort of proſtitutes were formerly aſhamed of, ſhould now paſs into the frequency and avowedneſs of a faſhion, become a part of Diſcipline and Inſtitution of youth: as if vice now diſdain'd to have any punies in its ſchole, and therefore by a prepoſterous anticipation, makes its pupils begin where they were wont to end, initiates them at firſt into that ſhameleſsneſs, which was wont to be the product only of a long habit. What the end will be of theſe Piqueerers in impudence, who thus put their virtue on the forlorn hope, is eaſie to divine. Yet is not this the only ſtate of danger: they who keep their ranks, and tho' they do not provoke aſſaults, yet ſtay to receive them, may be far enough from ſafety. She that lends a patient ear to the praiſes of her Wit or Beauty, intends at firſt perhaps only to gratify her vanity,; but when ſhe is once charm'd with that *Syren*'s ſong, bewitcht with that Flattery, ſhe inſenſibly declines to a kindneſs for that perſon that values her ſo much. And when that ſpark ſhall be blow'd up by perpetual remonſtrances of Paſſion, and perhaps little Romantick artifices of pretending to die for her, with a thouſand other tricks, which Luſt can ſuggeſt, 'twill like the *Naphtha* Naturaliſts ſpeak of, in a moment grow to an unquenchable flame, to the ruine both of her Virtue and Honour.

Innocence of the firſt intentions is not to be preſum'd upon.

20. Let no woman therefore preſume upon the innocence of her firſt intentions; ſhe may as well upon confidence of a ſound conſtitution, enter a peſt-houſe and converſe with the plague, whoſe contagion do's not

more ſubtily inſinuate it ſelf, than this ſort of temptation. And as in that caſe ſhe would not ſtay to define what were the critical diſtance, at which ſhe might approach with ſafety, but would run as far from it as ſhe could; ſo in this, it no leſs concerns her, to remove her ſelf from the poſſibility of danger, and (how unfaſhionable ſoever it be) to put on ſuch a ſevere Modeſty, that her very looks ſhould guard her, and diſcourage the moſt impudent aſſailant. 'Tis ſaid of *Philopemen*, that the *Lacedemonians* finding it their intereſt to corrupt him with money, they were yet ſo poſſeſt with the reverence of his virtues, that none durſt undertake to attaque him; and ſure 'twere not impoſſible for women to arrive at the ſame ſecurity. Such an authority there is in Virtue, that where 'tis eminent, 'tis apt to controle all looſe deſires, and he muſt not only be luſtful but ſacrilegious, that attempts to violate ſuch a Sanctuary.

They are miſerable trophies of Beauty that are built on the ruins of Virtue and Honour.

21. But perhaps that ſex may fear, that by putting on ſuch a Strictneſs, they ſhall looſe the glory of their Beauty, which is now chiefly eſtimated by the number of thoſe who court and adore them. To this in the firſt place I muſt ſay, that they are miſerable Trophies to Beauty that muſt be built on the ruins of Virtue and Honour; and ſhe that to boaſt the length of her hair ſhould hang her ſelf in it, would but act the ſame folly in a lower inſtance.

Beauty that is moſt reſerv'd, will be the more priz'd.

22. But then ſecondly, 'tis a great miſtake to think their Beauty ſhall be the leſs priz'd, ſince 'tis incident to man's nature to eſteem thoſe things moſt that are at a diſtance, whereas an eaſie and cheap deſcent begets contempt. So long as they govern themſelves by the exact rule of Prudence and Modeſty, their luſtre is like the Meridian Sun in its clearneſs, which tho' leſs approachable, is counted more glorious; but when they decline from thoſe, they are like that Sun in a cloud, which tho' ſafelier gazed on, is not half ſo bright. But beſides theſe collateral advantages, 'tis certain that Modeſty gives an immediate and direct improvement to Beauty; for tho' men for their own vitious ends wiſh them ſever'd, yet they cannot but think they are the moſt amiable when united, and you ſhall hear them often commend the aſpect of that Modeſty, which they would fain circumvent.

The woman who has loſt her honour, has loſt almoſt the poſſibility of a return to Virtue.

23. But in the third place, there is nothing but ſuch a Reſervedneſs that can indeed make their Beauty triumphant. Parly and conqueſt are the moſt diſtant things; and ſhe that deſcends to treat with an aſſailant, whatever he may tell her of his being her captive, 'tis but in order to the making her his; which when ſhe once is, there is no ſtate of ſervitude half ſo wretched, nothing in the world being ſo ſlaviſhly abject as a proſtitute woman. For beſides all the intereſt of another life which ſhe baſely reſigns, ſhe ſacrifices all that is valuable in this: her reputation ſhe puts wholly in his power that has debauched her, and which is worſe, her reformation too. If ſhe ſhould have a mind to return to virtue, ſhe dares not for fear he ſhould divulge her former ſtrayings from it: ſo that, like *Catiline*, ſhe is engag'd to future evils to ſecure the paſt. Yea ſhe ſubjects her ſelf not only to his luſt, but to all his humors and fancies, nay even to all thoſe who had been inſtrumental to their privacies, none of them all being to be diſpleas'd for fear of blabbing. And when 'tis remembred, what ſort of cattle they are, which are the engines in ſuch affairs, there can ſcarce be any thing more deplorable than to be within their laſh. 'Tis true indeed, ſome have found a way to cure this uneaſineſs by being their own delators, not only confeſſing but boaſting their crime, and by an impudent owning prevent all accuſations: yet even

this ſerves but to atteſt the intolerableneſs of the former condition, when this worſt of miſchiefs is choſe as a reſcue. Their impatience of being alwaies in awe, makes them take up that reſolution for infamy, which *Cæſar* did for death, who ſaid 'twas better to die once than to be alwaies in fear. And tho' this deſperate remedy may cure the fear, yet it aſcertains the reproach; for whereas in the impeachment of others there is place for doubt, and charity may prompt ſome to diſbelieve it, yet when the fact is juſtified by the offender, the evidence is uncontroulable, and withall doubles the infamy. For beſides that which adheres to the crime, there is a diſtinct portion due to the impudence; yet, like the Scorpion, it muſt cure its own ſting, and tho' it increaſes the obloquy, yet it deadens the ſenſe of it.

She paſſes thro' ſeveral ſtages of guilt and miſery, to ſpeculative Atheiſm.

24. But when they have thus ſteel'd their foreheads againſt all impreſſions of Shame, they are ſtill liable to many other painful effects of their ſin. What fears of being abandoned, what jealouſies of rivals do often torture them? And indeed not without ground: for they cannot but know, that the ſame humour of variety which engaged their Paramours in their love, may do the ſame for another, and another, and ſo on; it being as poſſible to graſp the air, as to confine a wandring luſt. Beſides, what anxious apprehenſions have they of the approach of age, which they are ſure will render them loathed and deſpicable, as alſo of all intermedial decaies of Beauty? How critically do they examine their glaſs? and every wrinkle which that repreſents in their face, becomes a deep gaſh in the heart. But if they have at any time the leiſure (or indeed the courage) to look inward, the view is yet more dreadful, a deform'd ſoul, ſpoil'd of its innocence, and rendred almoſt as brutiſh as the ſin it has conſented to. But tho' it be in ſome reſpects *like the beaſt that periſheth,* it is not, it cannot be in that which would moſt avail it; an endleſs being it cannot loſe, nor can it expect any thing from that preeminence of its nature, but an infinity of miſery. This is ſuch an amazing contemplation, as methinks, were it inſiſted on, ſhould allay the hotteſt blood; no impure flames being ſo fierce as to conteſt with thoſe of unquenchable fire. It is therefore tho' a very impious, yet no unskilful artifice of thoſe who would vitiate women in their Manners, to corrupt them in their Principles, and by extinguiſhing all hopes or fears of another World, perſwade them to immerſe boldly into all the abominations of this. 'Tis ſaid, this is now an art of wooing, the modern *præludium* to the baſeſt propoſals. It ſeems this age dares not truſt only to the former waies of ſeducement, fears there will not be women enough that will forget the intereſts of another world; and therefore is fain to ſet up a new party of others to diſbelieve it. And I fear that deſign has been too proſperous; many women are ſo much more concerned for their bodies than their ſouls, that they are contented the one ſhould be elevated upon the depreſſion and debaſement of the other; and whilſt with a vain tranſport, they can hear their outward form applauded, as Angelical, or Divine, they can very tamely endure to have their better part vilified and deſpiſed, defin'd to be only a puff of air in their noſtrils, which will ſcatter with their expiring breath, or in the Atheiſts phraſe, *Wiſd.* 2. 3. *vaniſh as the ſoft air.* Whereas they ſhould conſider, that they who preach this Doctrine to them, deſign it only to infer a pernicious Uſe. 'Tis a Maxim in Politicks, that thoſe counſels are ſuſpiciouſly to be ſcan'd, which carry in their front the adviſers intereſt; which certainly is never more viſible than in this caſe, he that once gains this point, never needing to conteſt for all the reſt. For he that can

perſwade a woman out of her ſoul, will ſoon command her body; and then what was at firſt his intereſt, becomes hers at laſt; and her wiſhes of the mortality of her ſoul, are much ſtronger than 'tis poſſible her belief of it could be: which confirms abundantly my affirmation of the ſervile, wretched condition of ſuch a perſon. For if we judge that a very ſevere ſlavery which makes people deſirous to reſign a temporal being, what ſhall we think of that which provokes them to renounce an eternal?

Nothing can be more deplorable than the ſtate of them who have abandoned their Virtue.

25. And now by this gradation of miſchiefs we may judge of the deplorable ſtate of thoſe who have abandoned their Virtue; wherein I doubt not the conſciences of many cannot only atteſt, but much improve the deſcription; and all I ſhall ſay to ſuch ,is, only to conſult that boſom monitour, which till they do, all Homilies will be inſignificant. My deſign was not therefore to tell them what they too well feel, but only to point out their wracks as warnings to others.

It concerns thoſe who are untainted, to conſider the miſeries of the other condition.

26. Let all thoſe therefore who are yet untainted, and by being ſo, have their judgments clear and unbiaſt, conſider ſoberly the miſery of the other condition, and that not only to applaud, but ſecure their own; and when ever the outward pomps and gaudy ſplendours of a vitiated woman ſeem, like that of *Crœſus*, to boaſt their happineſs, let them look thro' that Fallacy,and anſwer with *Solon, that thoſe only are happy who are ſo at their end.* Their moſt exquiſit deckings are but like the garlands on a beaſt deſign'd for Sacrifice; their richeſt gems are but the chains, not of their ornament but ſlavery; and their gorgeous apparel, like that of *Herod*, covers perhaps a putrid body, (for even that doth not ſeldom prove their fate) or however, a more putrid ſoul. They who can thus conſider them, will avoid one great ſnare; for 'tis not allways ſo much the luſt of the fleſh, as that of the eyes which betrays a woman. 'Tis the known infirmity of the Sex, to love gaiety, and a ſplendid appearance, which renders all temptations of that ſort ſo connatural to them, that thoſe who are not arrived to a more ſober eſtimate of things, will ſcarce be ſecure. It will therefore be neceſſary for them to regulate their opinions, and reduce all ſuch things to their juſt value, and then they will appear ſo trifling, that they can never maintain any competition with the more ſolid intereſts of Virtue and Honour. For tho' thoſe terms ſeem in this looſe age to be exploded; yet where the things are viſible, they extort a ſecret veneration, even from thoſe who think it their concern publickly to deride them: whereas on the other ſide a defection from them expoſes to all the contempt imaginable, renders them deſpis'd even by thoſe who betraid them to it, leaves a perpetual blot upon their Names, and their Family. For in the character of a woman, let Wit and Beauty, and all female accompliſhments ſtand in the front, yet if wantonneſs bring up the rear, the Satyr ſoon devours the Penegyrick, and (as in an Eccho) the laſt words only will reverberate, and her vice will be remembred when all the reſt will be forgot. But I need not declaim upon this theme; the Son of *Syrach* has done it to my hand, in many paſſages, but eſpecially *Ecclus.* 23. to which I refer the Reader.

A moſt important means of preſerving Modeſty, is a judicious choice of company.

27. What hath been already ſaid, is, I ſuppoſe, ſufficient to convince every woman how much it is her concern to keep her ſelf ſtrictly within the bounds of Modeſty and Virtue. In order to which, there is nothing more important than a judicious choice of their Company; I mean not only for men, but women alſo. Vice is contagious, and this eſpecially has that worſt quality of the Plague, that 'tis malicious, and would infect others. A woman that knows her ſelf ſcandalous, thinks ſhe is reproach'd by the virtue of another, looks on her as one that is *made to reprove her ways*, as it

is, *Wiſd.* 2. 14. and therefore in her own defence ſtrives to level the inequality, not by reforming her ſelf, (that ſhe thinks too hard a task) but by corrupting the other. To this end, ſuch as are willing to ſcrew themſelves into an acquaintance, will be officiouſly kind, and by all arts of condeſcention and obliging, endeavour to enſnare a woman of reputation into their intimacy. And if they ſucceed, if they can but once entangle her into that cobweb-friendſhip; they then, ſpider-like, infuſe their venom, never leave their vile inſinuations 'till they have poiſoned and ruined her. But and if on the other ſide they meet with one of too much ſagacity to be ſo entrap'd; if they cannot taint her Innocence, they will endeavour to blaſt her Fame; repreſent her to the World to be what they would have made her, that is in the Pſalmiſt's phraſe, *ſuch a one as themſelves*, *Pſal.* 50. 24. ſo that there is no converſing with them, but with a manifeſt peril either of Virtue or Honour, which ſhould methinks be a ſufficient diſſuaſive. 'Tis true, 'tis not alwaies in ones power to ſhun the meeting with ſuch perſons, they are too numerous, and too intruding to be totally avoided; unleſs as St. *Paul* ſays, 1 *Cor.* 5. 10. *one ſhould go out of the World.* But all voluntary converſe ſuppoſes a choice, and therefore every body that will, may refrain that, may keep on the utmoſt frontiers of civility, without ever ſuffering any approach towards intimacy and familiarity.

Were the virtuous ſhy herein, it might be a means of reclaiming thoſe that have been looſe.

28. And ſure were this diſtance duly obſerv'd, it might be of excellent uſe, a kind of Lay Excommunication, which might come very ſeaſonably to ſupply the want of the Eccleſiaſtick now out-dated. And this ſeems very well to agree with the ſenſe of *Solon*, the wiſe *Athenian* Law-giver, who, beſides that he ſhut the Temple-doors againſt them, interdicted them the ſacred Aſſemblies; made it one of his Laws that an Adultereſs ſhould not be permitted to wear any ornaments, that ſo they might in their dreſs carry the note of their infamy. Should we have the like diſtinction obſerved, I fear many of our gayeſt birds would be unplumed, and tho' the ſame be not now an expedient practicable, yet the former is, and might be of very good uſe. For beſides that already mentioned of ſecuring the innocent, it might perhaps have a good effect on the guilty, who could not but reflect with ſome ſhame on themſelves, if they were thus ſingled out and diſcriminated; whereas whilſt they are ſuffered to mix with the beſt Societies, (like hurt Deer in a herd) they flatter themſelves they are undiſcernable.

It would alſo redeem the Sex from the general ſcandal that lies upon it.

29. But indeed the advantage of this courſe is yet more extenſive, and would reach the whole Sex, which now ſeems to lie under a general ſcandal, for the fault of particular perſons. We know any conſiderable number of ſmutty ears caſts a blackneſs on the whole field, which yet were they apart, would perhaps not fill a ſmall corner of it; and in this uncharitable age, things are apt to be denominated not from the greater but worſer part: whereas, were the precious ſevered from the vile, by ſome note of diſtinction, there might then a more certain eſtimate be made: and I cannot be ſo ſevere to womankind, as not to believe the ſcandalous part would then make but a ſmall ſhew which now makes ſo great a noiſe.

That the honour of women may be ſafe, there is need not only of innocence but alſo prudence.

30. Beſides this I can ſuggeſt but one way more for women of honour to vindicate their ſex, and that is by making their own virtue as illuſtrious as they can; and by the bright ſhine of that, draw off mens eyes from the worſer proſpect. And to this there is requir'd not only innocency, but prudence; to abſtain, as from all real evil, ſo *from the appearance of it too*, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 22. not, by any doubtful or ſuſpicious action, to give any um-

brage for cenſure, but as the Apoſtle ſays in another caſe, 2 *Cor.* 11. 11. *to cut off occaſion from them that deſire occaſion;* to deny themſelves the moſt innocent liberties, when any ſcandalous inference is like to be deduc'd from them. And tho' perhaps no caution is enough to ſecure againſt the malicious, and the jealous; tho' 'tis poſſible ſome black mouth may aſperſe them, yet they have ſtill *Plato's* reſerve, who being told of ſome who had defam'd him, *'Tis no matter ſaid he, I will live ſo that none ſhall believe them.* If their lives be ſuch, that they may acquit themſelves to the ſober and unprejudiced, they have all the ſecurity can be aſpir'd to in this world; the more evincing atteſtation they muſt attend from the unerring Tribunal hereafter; where there lies a certain appeal for all injur'd perſons who can calmly wait for it.

SECT. II.

Of Meekneſs.

Meekneſs is a feminine virtue, pointed to by nature in the compoſition of the Sex.

1. IN the next place we may rank Meekneſs as a neceſſary feminine Virtue; this even Nature ſeems to teach, which abhors monſtroſities and diſproportions, and therefore having allotted to women a more ſmooth and ſoft compoſition of body, infers thereby her intention that the mind ſhould correſpond with it. For tho' the adulterations of art can repreſent in the ſame Face beauty in one poſition, and deformity in another; yet nature is more ſincere, and never meant a ſerene and clear forehead ſhould be the frontiſpiece to a cloudy tempeſtuous heart. 'Tis therefore to be wiſht they would take the admonition, and whilſt they conſult their glaſſes, whether to applaud or improve their outward form, they would caſt one look inwards, and examine what ſymmetry is there held with a fair outſide; whether any ſtorm of paſſion darken and overcaſt their interior beauty, and uſe at leaſt an equal diligence to reſcue that, as they would to clear their face from any ſtain or blemiſh.

Particularly enjoyn'd by religion.

2. But it is not nature only which ſuggeſts this, but the God of nature too, Meekneſs being not only recommended to all as a Chriſtian Virtue, but particularly enjoyn'd to women as a peculiar accompliſhment of their Sex, 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. where after the mention of all the exquiſit and coſtly deckings of art, this one *ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit*, is confronted to them, with this eminent atteſtation, that it is *in the ſight of God of great price*, and therefore to all who will not enter diſpute with God, and conteſt his judgment, it muſt be ſo too. Now, tho' Meekneſs be in it ſelf a ſingle entire Virtue, yet it is diverſifi'd according to the ſeveral faculties of the ſoul, over which it has influence; ſo that there is a Meekneſs of the Underſtanding, a Meekneſs of the Will, and a Meekneſs of the Affections; all which muſt concur to make up the Meek and quiet ſpirit.

1. Meekneſs of Underſtanding.

3. And firſt for the Meekneſs of the Underſtanding, it conſiſts in a pliableneſs to conviction, and is directly oppoſit to that ſullen adherence obſervable in too many; who judge of tenets not by their conformity to truth and reaſon, but to their prepoſſeſſions, and tenaciouſly retain'd opinions, only becauſe they (or ſome in whom they confide) have once own'd

them; and certainly ſuch a temper is of all others the moſt obſtructive to Wiſdom. This puts them upon the chance of a Lottery, and what they firſt happen to draw, determines them meerly upon the priviledge of its precedency, ſo that had *Mahomet* firſt ſeiz'd them, his tenure would have been as indefeſable as Chriſt's now. How great the force of ſuch prejudices are, we may ſee by the oppoſitions it rais'd againſt Chriſtian Doctrine in groſs at its firſt promulgation; the Jews blind Zeal for the Traditions of their Fathers, engageing them in the murder even of that very Meſſias whom thoſe Traditions had taught them to expect, and after in the perſecution of that Doctrine which his Reſurrection had ſo irrefragably atteſted. And to juſtify the propriety of this obſervation, to thoſe I now write to, 'tis expreſly affirm'd, *Acts* 13. 50. That they made uſe of the Zeal of the female Proſelytes for that purpoſe. *The* Jews *ſtirred up the devout and honourable women, and rais'd a perſecution againſt* Paul *and* Barnabas. So that 'tis no unſeaſonable advice to ſuch, to be ſure they ſee well their way before they run too fierce a carriere in it; otherwiſe the greateſt heat without light, do's but reſemble that of the bottomleſs pit, where flames and darkneſs do at once cohabit.

It avoids the extreames of ſtiffneſs and eaſineſs.

4. But whilſt I decry this prejudicate ſtiffneſs, I intend not to plead for its contrary extream, and recommend a too eaſie Flexibility; which is a temper of equal, if not more ill conſequence than the former. The adhering to one opinion can expoſe but to one error, but a mind that lies open to the effluxes of all new tenets, may ſucceſſively entertain a whole ocean of deluſions; and to be thus yielding, is not a Meekneſs, but ſervileneſs of Underſtanding. Indeed 'tis ſo great a weakneſs of mind, that the Apoſtle ſinks it ſomewhat below the impotence of women, and reſembles it to that of Children, *Eph.* 4. 14. yet it ſeems the folly of ſome women had levell'd them with children in this matter, for the ſame Apoſtle takes notice of ſuch, to whom as he gives the Epithet of ſilly, ſo the latter part of the Character ſpeaks them incorrigibly ſo, *ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 6. a deſcription which if we compare with our times, we muſt think prophetick. For how many inſtances hath this age given us of women ſo led captive; who being either affected with the novelty, or ſeduced by the pretended Zeal of a new teacher, have given up their underſtandings to him: and for a while this ſtrong man has kept poſſeſſion, but when a ſtronger than he hath come, it has fared as with him in the Goſpel, a louder Zeal, or a newer Doctrine ſoon divides his ſpoils; and that by force of the very ſame principle on which he ſet up, which within a while undermines the latter alſo, and ſo ſucceſſively, 'till the poor proſelyte has been hurried thro' all the mazes of wild errour, and at laſt perhaps (like a palat diſtracted by too much variety) ſhe fixes upon that which at firſt ſhe moſt decried. This has been eventually true in ſome, who ſetting out in the fierceſt deteſtation of Popery, have wandred ſo long like the blinded *Syrians*, 2 *Kings* 6. 20. that they have at laſt found themſelves in the midſt of *Samaria*; by an inſenſible circular motion been brought about to that Religion, from which alone they deſign'd to fly. So little do itching ears know whither they may be carried: and indeed the ear when infected with that prurient humour, may vie Miſchiefs with the tongue, which St. *James* tells us, *Chap.* 3. 15. *is* (tho' a little member) *a world of iniquity.*

Women by the opinion of their eaſineſs, are rendred more expos'd to ſeduction.

5. 'Tis therefore the moſt important concern of all, to fortifie that ſo aſſailable part; but 'tis eſpecially ſo of women, not only in reſpect of that natural imbecillity, which renders them liable to ſeducement, but alſo

becauſe the opinion of their being ſo, makes them particularly aim'd at by ſeducers. For, as he who is to put off adulterated wares, will chuſe the moſt unwary chapman, ſo theſe Sophiſticators of Divinity deſire the moſt undiſcerning Auditours. And truly that ſo many of that Sex are ſo, I do not ſo much impute to any natural defect, as to the looſe notions they have of Religion, of which they have perhaps ſome general confuſed apprehenſions, but have ſo little penetrated the depth of it, that they know not why they are *Chriſtians* rather than *Turks*, why of the Church of *England* rather than that of *Rome*, or *Geneva*. And while they are thus unfixt, and have no better principle than Cuſtom and Compliance; they have nothing to anſwer to any the groſſeſt deceit that can be obtruded upon them, which for ought they know or have conſider'd, may be as true as any thing they formerly profeſt. Now when any one in this condition ſhall be aſſaulted, not only by the repeated importunities of falſe teachers, but alſo by ingeminated threatnings of hell and damnation; ſhe is like one awaked by the outcry of fire, and in that amaze will be apt to run where-ever the firſt diſcoverer of her danger ſhall lead her.

The beſt antidote againſt novel doctrines, is to underſtand the grounds of the old.

6. I ſhall therefore moſt earneſtly recommend it as the beſt Antidote againſt the poiſon of novel doctrines, to examine well the grounds of the old. For want of this it is that our Church has been expos'd to ſo many frivolous cavils, it being too incident to the perverſe pride of human nature, to ſpeak evil of things we underſtand not. And had our ſhe-zealots firſt conſulted ſome ſober guides, and from them underſtood upon what grounds the Practice as well as Doctrine of our Church was founded, they could not ſo eaſily have been carried away *by every wind of Doctrine*, as the Apoſtle phraſes it, *Eph.* 4. 14.

Common juſtice obliges to hear, before we condemn.

7. Indeed this is no more than common juſtice exacts, which forbids the condemning even the vileſt malefactor unheard, (and unheard and not underſtood, are in this caſe terms equivalent) yet ſure they owe ſomething more to that Church from whoſe miniſtry themſelves muſt confeſs to have derived their Chriſtianity, in whoſe boſom they bave been cheriſh'd, and conſequently may plead a mother's right in them. So that unleſs poſſeſſion, which fortifies civil rights, deſtroys the Eccleſiaſtick; ſhe may challenge beſides that natural juſtice, (which is the common due of Humanity) a parental reſpect and reverence, a debt which is ſure very ill anſwered by thoſe who caſt off her obedience before they have at all conſidered what it is ſhe commands. And if the abdicating a child be a thing ſo unnatural, as needs ſome very important cauſe to juſtify it; the renouncing of a Parent muſt require a reaſon as far tranſcending that, as the guilt do's, if it be cauſleſs; and ſuch it muſt inevitably be in all, who for want of due examination, ſuffer themſelves to be led into groundleſs prejudices and diſguſts.

Women of quality cannot better employ their leiſure, than in looking into the grounds of the religion they profeſs.

8. To prevent that guilt, and a multitude of others which ſpring from it, I muſt again repeat my Propoſal, that women of Quality (who are preſumed to want neither parts nor leiſure for it) would a little look into the inſide of the Religion they profeſs: if it be a true one, 'twill bear the inſpection, truth never ſhunning the light; if it be not, the diſcovery cannot be too early. And indeed among the many remarkable impreſſes of truth our Church bears, this is one, that ſhe do's not blindfold her Proſelytes, leaves them the uſe of their diſcerning Faculty, and do's not by obtruding upon them an implicit belief, force them to lay down their Reaſon when they take up their Faith. And now why ſhould not Ladies ſpend a few of their many idle hours in this inquiſition? I mean, not to

embark themſelves in a maze of controverſies, but only to diſcern thoſe plain grounds of Truth on which our Church builds; which if well digeſted, will prove a better amulet againſt deluſion than the reading whole *Tomes* of Diſputations, more apt to diſtract than fortify their underſtandings. And had they thus done, had their minds been ballaſted by ſober principles, ſo many of them had never made up the triumphs of ſo many and ſo various ſeducers. and tho' to ſuch this advertiſement may come too late (like aſſiſtance after a defeat) yet it may be a ſeaſonable caution to others, and to thoſe I offer it, as that very temper wherein conſiſts that rational Meekneſs of the Underſtanding I would recommend to them, which is equally violated by a blind Obſtinacy, or as blind a Flexibility.

2. Meekneſs of Will, which is regulated by the will of God in things ſupernatural.

9. A ſecond ſort of Meekneſs is that of the Will, which lies in its juſt ſubordination, and ſubmiſſion to a more ſupream Authority, which in Divine things is the Will of God; in Natural or Moral, right Reaſon; and in human Conſtitutions, the command of Superiors. And ſo long as the Will governs it ſelf by theſe in their reſpective Orders, it tranſgreſſes not the Meekneſs requir'd of it. But experience atteſts, that the Will is now in its depravation an imperious Faculty, apt to caſt off that ſubjection to which it was deſign'd; and act independently from thoſe motives which ſhould influence it. This God knows is too common in all Ages, all Conditions, and Sexes: but the Feminine lies more eſpecially under an ill name for it. Whether that have grown from the low opinion conceived of their Reaſon, leſs able to maintain its Empire, or from the multipli'd habitual inſtances themſelves have given of unruly Wills, I ſhall not undertake to determine; but either way 'tis, I am ſure, ſo great a reproach as they ſhould be very induſtrious to wipe off. And truly I know nothing more incentive to that endeavour, than the having a right eſtimate of the Happineſs as well as Virtue of a governable Will. How calmly do thoſe glide thro' all (even the roughest) events, that can but maſter that ſtubborn Faculty? A will reſign'd to God's, how do's it enervate and enfeeble any calamity? Nay indeed it triumphs over it, and by that conjunction with him that ordains it, may be ſaid to command even what it ſuffers. 'Twas a Philoſophical Maxim, that a Wiſe moral man could not be injured, could not be miſerable. But ſure 'tis much more true of him who has that Divine Wiſdom of Chriſtian reſignation, that twiſts and inwraps all his choices with God's, and is neither at the pains nor hazard of his own elections; but is ſecure, that unleſs Omniſcience can be deceived, or Omnipotence defeated, he ſhall have what is really beſt for him.

By reaſon in things natural.

10. Proportionable (tho' not equal) to this, is the happyneſs of a Will regulated by Reaſon in things within its Sphere: 'tis the dignity of human Nature, and that which diſtinguiſhes it from that of Beaſts. Yea, even thoſe grow more contemptible in their kinds, the farther they are removed from it. The ſtupid ſturdineſs of an Aſs has render'd it Proverbial for folly, when the tractableneſs of other Animals has tempted ſome to liſt them among rationals. Beſides, Reaſon affords ſomething of a Baſis and Foundation for the Will to bottom on. He that governs himſelf by Reaſon (that being ſtill the ſame) will act equally and conſonant to himſelf; but he that do's a thing this moment, only becauſe he will, may the next have as weighty an argument to do ſomething quite contrary: and ſo may ſpend his whole time in unravelling his *Spiders webs*, as the Prophet rightly calls the vain deſigns of ſuch brutiſh men, *Iſa.* 59. 5. Not to ſpeak of thoſe recoilings and upbraidings of the rational faculties,

which are the uneaſy attendants of thoſe who reſiſt its more direct admonitions; there is nothing expoſes to more ſecular ruins. An ungovernable Will is the moſt precipitous thing imaginable, and like the Devil in the Swine, hurries headlong to deſtruction; and yet deprives one of that poor reſerve, that faint comfort of the miſerable, Pity; which will not be ſo much invited by the miſery, as averted by that wilfulneſs which cauſed it. Nay indeed, ſo little can ſuch perſons expect the compaſſion of others, that 'twill be hard for them to afford themſelves their own: the conſciouſneſs that their calamities are but the iſſues of their own perverſneſs, being apt to diſpoſe them more to hate than pity. And this is no ſmall accumulation of wretchedneſs, when a man ſuffers not only directly, but at the rebound too; reinflicts his miſeries upon himſelf by a grating reflection on his own madneſs. Yea, ſo great an aggravation is it, that even Hell it ſelf is enhaunced and compleated by it; all the torments there being edged and ſharpened by the woful remembrance, that they might once have been avoided.

In civil offices by the will of Superiors.

11. In the laſt place a Will duly ſubmiſſive to lawful Superiors, is not only an amiable thing in the eyes of others, but exceedingly happy to ones ſelf; 'tis the parent of peace and order both publick and private. A bleſſing ſo conſiderable, as is very cheaply bought with a little receding from ones own will or humour: whereas the contrary temper is the ſpring and original of infinite confuſions, the grand incendiary which ſets Kingdoms, Churches, Families in combuſtion; a flat contradiction not only to the word, but even the works of God; a kind of Anticreative power, which reduces things to that Chaos from whence God drew them. Our age has given us too many and too pregnant inſtances of its miſchievous effects, which may ſerve to enhaunce the value of that governable malleable temper I now recommend. And as a will thus reſign'd to Reaſon and juſt Authority, is a felicity all rational natures ſhould aſpire to; ſo eſpecially the feminine ſex, whoſe paſſions being naturally the more impetuous, ought to be the more ſtrictly guarded and kept under the ſevere diſcipline of Reaſon; for where 'tis otherwiſe, where a woman has no guide but her Will, and her Will is nothing but her Humour, the event is ſure to be fatal to her ſelf, and often to others alſo.

The reſtraint of the will is a happy impoſition.

12. And the hazard of this renders that other reſtraint of the will, I mean that of obedience to Superiors, a very happy impoſition; tho' perhaps 'tis not always thought ſo, for thoſe who reſiſt the government of Reaſon, are not very apt to ſubmit to that of Authority. Yet ſure God and nature do atteſt the particular expediency of this to women, by having placed that Sex in a degree of inferiority to the other. Nay farther 'tis obſervable, that as there are but three ſtates of life, thro' which they can regularly paſs, *viz.* Virginity, Marriage, and Widowhood; two of them are ſtates of Subjection, the firſt to the parent, the ſecond to the husband; and the third, as it is caſual, whether ever they arrive to it or no, ſo if they do, we find it by God himſelf reckon'd as a condition the moſt deſolate and deplorable. If I ſhould ſay this happens upon that very ſcore that they are left to their own guidance, the ſad wracks of many would too much juſtify the gloſs; but however it evinces, that God ſets not the ſame value upon their being maſterleſs, which ſome of them do, whilſt he reckons them moſt miſerable, when they are moſt at liberty.

Submiſſion is by God's aſſignment the lot of women.

13. And ſince God's aſſignation has thus determined ſubjection to be the women's lot, there needs no other argument of its fitneſs, or for their acquieſcence. Therefore when ever they oppoſe it, the contumacy flies higher

er than the immediate Superior, and reaches God himſelf. And I am apt to think there would not many of that timerous Sex dare ſo far, were it not for ſome falſe punctillioes of honour, which (like thoſe among our Duelliſts) have impoſed themſelves. Theſe repreſent Meekneſs and Submiſſion as a ſilly ſheepiſh quality, unfit for women of breeding and ſpirit: whilſt an imperious obſtinacy paſſes for nobleneſs and greatneſs of mind. But alas! they are wofully miſtaken in their notion of a great ſpirit, which conſiſts in ſcorning to do unworthy and vile things, and courageouſly encountering the adverſe events of life, not in ſpurning at duty, or ſeeking to pull themſelves from that Sphere where the divine Wiſdom hath placed them. No ſure, ſtubbornneſs is the mark only of a great ſtomack, not of a great mind; and the cruelty of a coward may as well denominate him valiant, as the ungovernableneſs of a woman can ſpeak her generous.

Nothing is more odious than an imperious woman.

14. In this I preſume I ſpeak the common ſenſe of all; for what value ſoever they put upon themſelves, nothing renders them leſs acceptable to others; an imperious woman being a plague to her relatives, and a deriſion to ſtrangers, yea and a torment to her ſelf; every the leaſt contradiction (which a meek perſon would paſs over inſenſibly) inflaming ſuch an unruly temper, and tranſporting her to ſuch extravagances, as often produce very miſchievous effects. On the other ſide, if ſhe be humour'd and complied with, that ſerves only to make her more inſolent and intolerable; makes her humours grow to ſuch an height, that ſhe knows not her ſelf what would pleaſe her, and yet expects that others ſhould: ſo that to ſuch a one, we may apply what *Hannibal* ſaid of *Marcellus*, that if he were vanquiſh'd, he never gave reſt to himſelf, nor if he were victorious, to others. Certainly the uneaſineſs of a perverſe ſpirit is ſo great, that could ſuch come but to compare it with the calm and happy ſerenity of Meekneſs and Obedience, there would need no other Lecture to commend them to their eſteem or practice.

3. Meekneſs of Affections.

15. The laſt branch of Meekneſs is that of Affections, and conſiſts in reducing the paſſions to a temper and calmneſs, not ſuffering them to make uproars within to diſturb ones ſelf, nor without to the diſquieting of others; and to this regulation Meekneſs is generally ſubſervient. Yet becauſe the correcting of ſome particular paſſions are more immediatly aſſignable to other virtues, I ſhall inſiſt only upon that, on which this has a more direct and peculiar influence, I mean Anger, a two edged paſſion, which whilſt it deals its blows without, wounds yet more fatally within. The commotion and vexation which an angry man feels, is far more painful than any thing he can ordinarily inflict upon another: herein juſtifying the Epithet uſually given to Anger, that it is a ſhort madneſs; for who that were in his right wits, would incur a greater miſchief to do a leſs? It is indeed ſo great a diſtemper of the mind, that he that is poſſeſt with it is incompetent for any ſober undertaking, and ſhould as much be ſuſpended from acting, as one in a Phrenſie or Lunacy. This was the judgment and practice too of *Plato*, who going to chaſtiſe a ſervant, and finding himſelf grow angry, ſtopt his correction; a friend coming in and asking what he was doing, *puniſhing*, replies he, *an angry man*, as thinking himſelf unfit to diſcipline another, 'till he had ſubdued his own paſſion. Another time his ſlave having offended him, *I would beat thee*, ſaies he, *but that I am angry*. It were endleſs indeed to recite the black Epithets given by all Moraliſts to this vice. It ſhall ſuffice to take the ſuffrage of the Wiſeſt of men, one that had acquainted himſelf to *know madneſs and folly*, *Eccl.* 1. 17. and we find it his ſentence, that *anger reſts in the boſom of fools*, *Eccl.* 7. 11.

Violent paſſion moſt indecent in women.

16. And what is thus univerſally unbecoming to human nature, cannot ſure be leſs indecent for the gentler Sex; 'tis rather more ſo, every thing contracting ſo much more of deformity, by how much it recedes from its proper kind. Now nature hath befriended women with a more cool and temperate conſtitution, put leſs of fire and conſequently of choler, in their compoſitions; ſo that their heats of that kind are adventitious and preternatural, rais'd often by fancy or pride, and ſo both look more unhandſomly, and have leſs of pretence to vail and cover them. Beſides women have a native feebleneſs, unable to back and aſſert their angers with any effective force, which may admoniſh them 'twas never intended they ſhould let looſe to that paſſion, which nature ſeems by that very inability to have interdicted them. But when they do it, they render themſelves at once deſpis'd and abhor'd; nothing being more ridiculouſly hateful than an impotent rage.

Eſpecially when it breaks out in clamours and ſcolding.

17. But as the moſt feeble inſect may ſometimes diſturb, tho' not much hurt us, ſo there is one feminine weapon which as 'tis alwaies ready, ſo proves often troubleſome; I mean the Tongue, which tho' in its loudeſt clamours can naturally invade nothing but the ear, yet even that is a moleſtation. The barking of a dog, tho' we are ſecure he cannot bite, is a grating unpleaſant ſound; and while women ſeek that way to vent their rage, they are but a ſort of ſpeaking brutes, and ſhould conſider whether that do not reflect more contempt upon themſelves, than their moſt virulent reproaches can fix upon others.

Which tho' formidable, makes no advantage.

18. But ſome things have had the luck to acquire a formidableneſs no body knows how, and ſure there is no greater inſtance of it than in this caſe. A clamorous woman is lookt on, tho' not with reverence, yet with much dread; and we often find things done to prevent or appeaſe her ſtorms, which would be denied to the calm and rational deſires of a meeker perſon. And perhaps ſuch ſucceſſes have not been a little acceſſory to the fomenting the humour: yet ſure it gives them little cauſe of triumph, when they conſider how odious it makes them, how unfit (yea intolerable) for human ſociety; let them take the verdict of *Solomon* who declares it *better to dwell in a corner of a houſe top, than with a brawling woman in a wide houſe*, *Prov.* 25. 24. Nor do's the ſon of *Sirac* ſpeak leſs ſharply tho' more ironically, *Ecclus.* 26. 27. *A loud crying woman and a ſcold, ſhall be ſought out to drive away the enemy.* And tho' he taxes the feminine vices impartially enough, yet there is ſcarce any of them which he more often and more ſeverely brands than this of unquietneſs. It ſeems 'twas a thing generally lookt on, as very inſufferable; as appears by *Socrates*, who when he deſign'd to diſcipline himſelf to perfect patience and tolerance, knew no better way of exerciſe, than to get a Shrew to his wife, an excellence that may perhaps again recommend a woman, when we fall to an age of Philoſophers; but at preſent 'twill be hard for any of our *Xantippes* to find a *Socrates*; and therefore that quality is as deſtructive to their intereſts in getting husbands, as it is to the husband's quiet when he is got. But I preſume I need not declaim further againſt this fault, which I ſuppoſe cannot be frequent among that rank of women to whom this tract is intended: for if neither moral nor divine Conſiderations have prevented it, yet probably civility and a gentile education hath; a ſcold being a creature to be lookt for only in Stalls and Markets, not among perſons of quality. Yet if there be any that have deſcended to ſo ſordid a practice, they have ſo far degraded themſelves, that they are not to wonder if others ſubſtract that reſpect, which upon other accounts they might demand.

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19. And to ſuch I ſhould recommend the uſual method of Phyſick, which is to cure by revulſion, let that ſharp humour which ſo habitually flows to the tongue, be taught a little to recoile, and work inward; and inſtead of reviling others, diſcipline and correct themſelves: let them upbraid their own madneſs, that to gratifie an impotent, nay a moſt painful paſſion, have degenerated from what their nature, their qualities, their education deſign'd them. And if they can thus reverſe their diſpleaſures, 'twill not only ſecure others from all their indecent aſſaults, but it will at laſt extinguiſh them. For anger is corroſive, and if it be kept only to feed upon it ſelf, muſt be its own devourer; if it be permitted to fetch no forrage from without, nor to nouriſh it ſelf with ſuſpicions and ſurmiſes of others, nor to make any ſallies at the tongue, it cannot long hold out.

They whoſe angers are thus impotent againſt others, ſhould turn the fury on themſelves.

20. And how much they will herein conſult their intereſt and their reputation too, they may be taught by *Solomon*, who makes it the diſtinctive *ſign of a fooliſh woman to be clamorous, Prov.* 9. 13. whereas when he gives the character of his Excellent woman, he links Wiſdom and Gentleneſs together, *ſhe openeth her mouth with Wiſdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindneſs, Prov.* 31. 26. If this verdict may be admitted (as ſure it ought, whether we conſider his wiſdom, or dear bought experience in women) it will confute the common plea of querulous ſpirits, who think to ſeem inſenſible of any the leaſt provocation, is to appear ſilly and ſtupid; tho' truly if it were ſo, 'twould be full as eligible as to appear mad and raving, as they commonly do in the tranſport of their fury.

To be clamorous is a ſign of folly.

21. To conclude, Meekneſs is ſo amiable, ſo indearing a quality, and ſo peculiarly embelliſhing to women, that did they but all conſider it with half the attention they do their more trivial exterior ornaments, 'twould certainly be taken up as the univerſal mode, in all the ſeveral variations of it this Section has preſented.

Were the beauty of Meekneſs conſider'd, it would be taken up inſtead of other ornaments.

SECT. III.

Of Compaſſion.

1. OF near affinity to the Virtue of Meekneſs, is that of Mercy and Compaſſion, which indeed can ſcarce thrive in any place where the former hath not prepared the ſoil: Anger and Obſtinacy being like that rough Eaſt-wind which brought the Egyptian Locuſts, *Exod.* 10. 13. to eat up every green thing in the Land. A mind haraſſed with its own impatiency, is not at leiſure to obſerve, much leſs to condole the calamities of others. But as a calm and clear day befriends us with a more diſtinct Proſpect of diſtant Objects; ſo when all is quiet and ſerene within us, we can then look about us, and diſcern what exigencies of others invite our pity.

Compaſſion is a feminine virtue, that has an affinity to Meekneſs.

2. I need not ſay much to raiſe an eſtimate of this Virtue, ſince 'tis ſo eſſential to our Nature, ſo interwoven in the compoſition of Humanity, that we find in Scripture phraſe, compaſſion is generally ſeated in the moſt inward ſenſible part of our frame, the bowels. So *Col.* 3. 12. *Put on therefore bowels of mercy;* and *Phil.* 2. 1. *Bowels and mercies.* So that a cruel ruthleſs perſon unmans himſelf, and is by the common vote of mankind

'Tis a virtue ſeated in our moſt inward ſenſible part, our bowels.

kind to be liſted among brutes; nay, not among the better, but only the more hateful, noxious ſort of them.

'Tis moſt connatural to the female Sex.

3. But this is yet more unnatural in the female Sex, which being of ſofter mould, is more pliant and yielding to the impreſſions of pity, and by the ſtrength of fancy redoubles the horrour of any ſad object. Yea ſo remarkable is this tenderneſs, that God, when he would moſt magnify his own compaſſion, illuſtrates it by that of women, as the higheſt human inſtance. Indeed ſuch a propenſion have women to commiſeration, that they are uſually taxed with an exceſs in it; ſo that any imprudent lenity is Proverbially called, *A womaniſh Pity*, and therefore it may be thought an impertinence to exhort them to that which they can ſcarce avoid. But to this I anſwer; firſt, that in this degenerous age, 'tis no news to ſee people violate their inſtincts, as well as their duties, and be worſe than their nature inclines them; many ſins being committed even againſt the grain, and with violence to conſtitution.

Is not a melting of the eyes, or yerning of the bowels, but a charitable concern to help and relieve.

4. Yet ſecondly, 'tis not a meer melting of the eyes, or yerning of the bowels I deſign to recommend: Alas! their tears will not be drink to a thirſty ſoul, nor will ſhivering at his nakedneſs clothe him. This is ſuch an inſignificant mercy as St. *James* deſcribes, ſaying to a brother or a ſiſter, *be ye warmed, be ye filled, but not giving them things needful to the body*, ch. 2. 16. Indeed, ſhe that weeps over thoſe diſtreſſes ſhe will not relieve, might have been fit to be enter'd in the liſt of the mourning women among the Jews and Heathens, who were hired to make up the Tragick Pomp of Funerals with their mercenary ſorrow, but had no real concern in that loſs they ſeem'd to bewail. 'Tis therefore a more active ſort of Compaſſion to which I would invite them; and yet for methods ſake, I ſhall conſider it under two diſtinct Heads, Giving, and Forgiving.

1. By Giving, or liberality.

5. By Giving, in this place, I mean not a general liberality, (tho' that prudently bounded, is an Excellence well becoming Perſons of Fortune) but only ſuch a Giving as terminates upon the needy, and is applied to ſuccour their indigencies. To give to thoſe from whom they may expect returns, may be a deſign, but at the beſt can be but generoſity and frankneſs of humour. 'Tis only then mercy (as Chriſt Himſelf has deſign'd it) when it is to thoſe from whom they can *hope for nothing again*.

This was a principal part of the character of Solomon's *virtuous Woman, to ſtretch forth her hand to the poor.*

6. And in this Virtue women have in former Ages eminently excell'd, yea ſo eſſential was it, that we find *Solomon* thought not their character compleat without it, but numbers it among the properties of his Virtuous Woman, *Prov.* 31. 20. *She ſtretcheth forth her hand to the poor, and reacheth her hand to the needy.* And it is a little obſervable, that after he has deſcrib'd her induſtry and Diligence for the acquiring of Wealth, this is ſet in the front of her diſburſments, as the principal uſe ſhe made of it; and precedes her providing Scarlet for her Houſhold, or fine Linnen and Purple for her ſelf, v. 21, 22. The application is very obvious, and admoniſhes all that own the ſame Title of Virtuous Women, to prefer the neceſſities of others before their own ſuperfluities and dilicacies. Nay, if they look further, and conſider who it is that is perſonated in the poor, that begs in every needy diſtreſſed ſuppliant, and that will finally own every act of mercy as done to himſelf; methinks they ſhould ſometimes think fit to ſacrifice even their moſt moderate enjoyments to their charity, be aſhamed to ſerve themſelves before their Saviour, or let him ſtand naked and hungry, whilſt they are ſolacing with that which would relieve him.

7. But

This relief of others is ſupplanted by vanity and luxury.

7. But how then ſhall they anſwer it, who ſuffer him to be ſupplanted, not by their needs, but exceſſes; who have ſo devoted their hearts and purſes to vanity and luxury, that they have neither will nor power to ſuccour the wants of others? How unequal and diſproportionate is it, that thoſe who ſtudy to fling away mony upon themſelves, cannot be tempted by any importunity and diſtreſs, to drop an alms to the poor? What a prepoſterous ſight is it to ſee a Lady, whoſe gay Attire gives her the glittering of the Sun, yet have nothing of its other properties, never to cheer any drooping, languiſhing creature by her influence? 'Tis the counſel of the ſon of *Sirac, not to give the poor any occaſion to curſe thee, Ecclus.* 4. 5. But ſure ſuch perſons do it, if the poor happen not to have more Charity than they exemplify to them. For when they ſhall find ſuch hard hearts under ſuch ſoft raiment, ſee them beſtow ſo much upon the decking their own bodies, and do nothing towards the neceſſary ſupport of theirs; 'tis a ſhrewd trial of their Meekneſs. Poverty is apt of it ſelf to imbitter the ſpirit, and needs not ſuch an additional temptation.

Which laviſh expence is the moſt ſharp incitation of the poor to impatience.

8. Nay farther, when a poor ſtarving wretch ſhall look upon one of theſe gay creatures, and ſee that any one of the baubles, the looſeſt appendage of her dreſs, a fan, a busk, perhaps a black patch, bears a price that would warm his empty bowels; will he not have ſharp incitations not only to execrate her pride, and his own poverty, but conſequently to repine at the unequal diſtribution of Providence, and add ſin to his miſery? The denial therefore of an alms may be a double cruelty, to the ſoul as well as to the body. 'Tis ſaid of *Xenocrates*, that a chaſed Bird flying to his boſom, he reſcued it with much ſatisfaction, ſaying, He had not betray'd a ſuppliant; but this is in that caſe reverſt, and in a higher inſtance; for what can be more the betraying of a ſuppliant, than inſtead of ſupplying his wants to rob him of his innocence, and be his ſnare in lieu of his refuge? This is a conſideration I wiſh more deeply impreſt upon the women of this Age: and truly 'tis their concern it ſhould be ſo; for ſince at the laſt day the inqueſt ſhall be ſo particular upon this very thing, 'tis but neceſſary they ſhould examine how they are fitted to paſs that teſt.

Women of quality ſhould audit the expences of vanity and charity.

9. Let them therefore keep a preparatory audit within their own breſt, reflect upon the expences of their vanity, what the delicacy of their food, what the richneſs and variety of their clothes, nay what the meer hypocriſies of their dreſs, in falſe hair and complexion has coſt them; to which they may alſo add the charge of their recreations and divertiſements, thoſe coſtly arts of chaſing away that time, which they will one day wiſh to recall: let them I ſay compute all this, and then confront to it the account of their Charity, and I much fear the latter will with many of them be comparatively as undiſcernable, as *Socrates* found *Alcibiades*'s Lands in the Map of the whole World, be ſo perfectly overwhelm'd, that it will appear little in their own ſight and nothing in God's.

They who give much, may have their liberality outvied by a mite.

10. For if the poor Widow's mite acquir'd a value meerly from her poverty, that ſhe had no more; by the rule of contraries we may conclude, how deſpicable the ſcanty oblations of the rich are in God's account. If even their liberality who gave much, was outvied by a farthing, *Mark* 12. 41. to what point of diminution muſt their niggardly offerings, who give little, be reduced? eſpecially when they ſhall be compared with the numerous and coſtly ſacrifices they make to pride and luxury. Nay I wiſh ſome were not guilty of more than the diſproportion, even the total omiſſion of Charity, that in a multitude of Taylors bills cannot produce the account of one Garment for the poor, that amidſt the delicacies of their

their own diet (nay perhaps of their dogs too) never order'd ſo much as the crumbs of their Table to any hungry *Lazarus*. But let all ſuch remember, that there will come a time, when one of *Tabitha's* coats, *Acts* 9. 39. will be of more value than all their richeſt Wardrobes, tho' they could number Gowns with *Lucullus's* Cloaks, which the *Roman* Story reports to be five thouſand; and that when their luxurious fare ſhall only feaſt the worms, and render them paſſive in that Epicuriſm they acted before, they will wiſh they had made the bellies of the poor their refectory, and by feeding them nouriſh'd themſelves to immortality.

Poſſeſſors of good things are only ſtewards and factors.

11. Let this I ſay be ſeriouſly remember'd now, leſt hereafter they fall under the ſame exprobrating remembrance with the rich man in the Goſpel, *Luke* 16. 25. *Remember that thou in thy life time receivedſt thy good things, and* Lazarus *that which was evil; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* A text which St. *Gregory* profeſſes was ever ſounding in his ears, and made him look with ſuſpicion and dread upon that grandeur to which he was advanced, as fearing it might be deſign'd as his final reward. With what terrour then may thoſe look upon their preſent good things, who by engroſſing them wholly to themſelves, own them as their entire portion, and implicitly diſclaim their ſhare of the future? For to that none muſt pretend, who receive their tranſitory goods under any other notion than that of a Steward or Factor: as we may ſee in the parable of the Talents, where thoſe that had the reward of the five and ten Cities were not ſuch as had conſumed their Talents upon their own riot and exceſſes, but ſuch as had induſtriouſly emploied them according to the deſign of their Lord. And if it there fared ſo ill with the meer unprofitable ſervant, who had hoarded up his Talent, what ſhall become of thoſe, who ſquander away theirs, and can give no account either of Uſe or Principal?

The examples of primitive charity ſhould be propos'd by women of quality to themſelves.

12. Were theſe conſiderations duly laid to heart, we might hope to ſee ſome of the primitive Charity revive, when women of the Higheſt rank converted their Ornaments and coſtly Deckings into clothing for the poor, and thought no retinue ſo deſirable, ſo honourable as a train of Almſfolks. But I ſpeak improperly, when I make the poor their attendants, for indeed they rather attended the poor, did not only order the ſupply of their wants, but were themſelves their miniſters, waited about their ſick beds, dreſt their moſt loathſom ulcers, and deſcended to all the moſt ſervile offices about them.

Even the acting perſonally in it.

13. But theſe were ſuch heights, ſuch traſcendencies of mercy, as requir'd a deeper foundation of Humility than will now be often met with: yet let me take the occaſion to ſay, that it may be a good managery of a charity to act (as far as they can) perſonally in it. For beſides that it prevents ſome abuſes and frauds, which deputed Agents may ſometimes be tempted to, they pay God a double tribute in it, of their perſons as well as their fortunes. Next they bring themſelves into acquaintance with the poor, and by that means correct thoſe contempts and nice diſdains, which their own proſperity is too apt to create. Further yet, they excite their own compaſſion, which being a motion of the ſenſitive part of the mind, cannot be ſtirr'd ſo effectually by any thing, as by the preſence of the object; the moſt pathetick tragical deſcription of a diſtreſs, being not able to affect us half ſo much as one ocular demonſtration. Laſtly 'tis an apt means to increaſe their thankfulneſs to Almighty God, whoſe bounty to themſelves muſt needs make a deeper impreſſion, when 'tis compared with the neceſſitous condition of others. For things are beſt illuſtrated

by their contraries, and 'tis too obſervable in our depraved nature, that we value not things by their real poſitive worth, but comparatively as they excell others, nor ever make a right eſtimate of what we enjoy, 'till our own or others wants inſtruct us.

And therefore it would be a commendable induſtry to acquire thoſe ſkils which may enable to reliefs.

14. Upon all theſe conſiderations it may be a very becoming uſeful circumſtance in any charitable miniſtry to be themſelves the actors; and to that end 'twill be a very commendable induſtry, to qualify themſelves to be helpful to the poor in as many inſtances as they can; not only opening their purſes, but diſpenſatories too, providing medicines for ſuch as either by diſeaſe, or caſualty want that ſort of relief. A charity which I doubt not is practiſed by many, and I wiſh it were by more, that our nicer Dames who ſtudy only Coſmeticks for themſelves, would change the Scene, and inſtead of repairing or diſguiſing their own complexions, ſtudy the reſtauration of their decrepit Patient's limbs. And ſure, tho' it be a leſs faſhionable, 'tis much a better ſight, to ſee a Lady binding up a ſore, than painting her face; and ſhe will caſt a much ſweeter ſavour in God's noſtrils, with the ſmell of unguents and balſoms, than with the moſt exquiſite odors and perfumes. For ſince God profeſſes, *Iſa.* 1. 13. that that very *incenſe* which was deſign'd as part of his worſhip, *was an abomination to him*, becauſe not accompanied with the acts of Mercy, we cannot think he will better like of thoſe, which have no higher aim than delicacy and ſenſuality.

Compaſſion as it is exercis'd in giving, is alſo in forgiving.

15. But beſides this part of mercy in Giving, there is another, that of Forgiving, which may happen to be of a larger extent than the former: for whereas that was confin'd to the poor, this has no ſuch limits, but as it is poſſible to be injured by perſons of all ranks, ſo this pardoning mercy is to reach equally with that poſſibility. This is that part of Charity which we peculiarly call Clemency, a Virtue which not only Chriſtianity but Morality recommends. The Ancient *Romans* had it in ſuch veneration, that they number'd it not only among Virtues but Deities, and built it a Temple. And they were ſomewhat towards the right in it, for it was, tho' not God, yet ſo eminent an attribute of his, that nothing can more aſſimilate man unto him.

Of this virtue there are heathen as well as Chriſtian examples.

16. There are many Heroick acts of this kind to be met with among the virtuous Heathens. *Lycurgus* not only forgave *Alexander* who had ſtruck out his eye, but entertain'd him in his houſe, and by his gentle admonitions reclaim'd him from his former vicious life. *Ariſtides* being after ſignal ſervices, and without crime, unjuſtly baniſh'd by his Citizens, was ſo far from acting, or imprecating againſt them, that at his departure from *Athens* he ſolemnly prayed the Gods, that they might never by any trouble or diſtreſs be forc'd to recall him. So *Phocion* being unjuſtly condemned, left it as a ſolemn charge to his Son *Phocas*, that he ſhould never revenge his death. A multitude of the like examples might be produced, but we need not borrow light from their faint Tapers, when we have the Sun-beams, I mean the Sun of Righteouſneſs, our bleſſed Saviour, who, as he has recommended this grace by his precept, ſo he has ſignally exemplified it to us in his Practice; the whole deſign of his deſcent to earth being only to reſcue his enemies from deſtruction. And as every part of his life, ſo the laſt Scene of it was particularly adapted to this end, and his expiring Breath expended in mediating for his crucifiers; *Father forgive them, Luke* 23. 34. And this copy of his was tranſcribed by his firſt followers, the Primitive Chriſtians in their ſevereſt Matyrdoms praying for their perſecutors.

17. Thus

As there are deteſtable inſtances of the contrary vice.

17. Thus are we in the Apoſtles phraſe *compaſſed about with a cloud of witneſſes, Heb.* 12. 1. of eminent examples, which ought to have a forcible influence upon all, but methinks ſhould not fail to have it on that Sex, whoſe native tenderneſs prediſpoſes them to the Virtue, and who need but ſwim with the ſtream of their own inclinations. How can we think that their melting eyes ſhould ever ſparkle fire, or delight in ſpectacles of cruelty, that their flexible tender hearts ſhould turn into Steel or Adamant, be uncapable of all impreſſions of pity? Yet God knows ſuch changes have too often been ſeen: women have not only put off that ſoftneſs peculiar to them, but the common inſtincts of Humanity, and have exceeded not only ſavage men, but beaſts in cruelty. There have been too frequent inſtances of the implacable malice, and inſatiable cruelties of women. I need not call in the aid of Poetick fiction, and tell them of *Clytemneſtra, Medea,* or the *Belides*, with hundreds of others, celebrated as inſtances of Heroick wickedneſs. There are examples enough in more authentick Stories, the *Roman Tullia,* the *Perſian Paryſatis*; and that we may not paſs by the ſacred Annals, *Jezebel,* and *Athaliah.* I forbear to multiply examples of this kind, of which all ages have produced ſome ſo eminent, as have render'd it a common obſervation, that no cruelty exceeds that of an exaſperated woman: and it is not much to be wonder'd at, ſince nothing can be ſo ill in its priſtine ſtate as that which degenerates from a better. No enmity we know ſo bitter as that of alienated friends; no ſuch perſecution as that of Apoſtates, and proportionably no ſuch ferity as that of a perverted mildneſs. So that the Poets were not much out, who as they repreſented the Graces under the figures of women, ſo they did the Furies too. And ſince 'tis in their election which part they will act, they ought to be very jealous over themſelves. The declinations to any vice are gradual, ſometimes at firſt ſcarce diſcernible; and probably the greateſt monſters of cruelty, would at the beginning have deteſted thoſe inhumanities which afterwards they acted with greedineſs.

Suſpicion begets a quarrel, that makes hatred, that malice, that revenge.

18. It concerns them therefore to ward thoſe beginnings whoſe end may be ſo fatal. She that is quick in apprehending an affront, perhaps will not be ſo quick in diſmiſſing that apprehenſion; and if it be permitted to ſtay, 'twill quickly improve, twenty little circumſtances ſhall be ſuborn'd to foment it with new ſuſpicions, 'till at laſt it grow to a quarrel, from thence to hatred, from that to malice, and from that to revenge: and when that black paſſion has overſpread the mind, like an Egyptian darkneſs it admits no gleam of Reaſon or Religion, but hurries them blindfold to their own ruin often as well as others.

The ſpleen of a woman a moſt frequent cauſe of murders.

19. Let none think this only a fancy or ſcheme of Diſcourſe: there have been too many tragical experiments of its truth. How many men have been mortally engaged upon no weightier original than the ſpleen of a woman? the frantick notion of honour among our Duelliſts fitly correſponding with the as frantick impulſes of feminine revenge, and any imaginary injury (or perhaps but juſt imputation) to the Lady, obliging her Gallant to ruſh upon the moſt real ſin and danger. A madneſs ſomething beyond that which the Romances deſcribe of Knight Errantry: for that generally is for the relief of diſtreſſed Damſels, but this is only to humour the too proſperous ones, the inſolent and the proud. Thoſe therefore that have obſerved the common occaſions of Duels, have not unfitly divided them between Wine and Women; it being hard to ſay which is the moſt intoxicating and beſotting. The Son of *Sirac* couples them together, *Ecclus.* 19 2.

Wine and Women will make men of underſtanding fall away. The many modern examples of this miſchief, as they ſhould ſtrike an extream terrour into thoſe Women who have been any way acceſſary to the Death, or but danger of any man; ſo are they juſt matter of caution to all, ſo to regulate their Paſſions, that they never come within diſtance of Implacability; for if once they arrive there, themſelves can give no ſtop.

20. In order to this, 'twill be well to conſider at the firſt incitation, what the real ground is; perhaps ſometimes they are angry (as the Galatians were at St. *Paul, Gal.* 4. 16.) *at thoſe that tell them the truth*; ſome ſcandalous, or at leaſt ſuſpicious behaviour, may have engaged a friend to admoniſh them; (an office that has ſometimes prov'd very fatal; thoſe commonly that have moſt guilt having leaſt patience to hear of it.) And if this be the caſe, 'tis the greateſt injuſtice in the world to make that a quarrel which is really an obligation: and therefore inſtead of maligning their Monitor, they ought to thank and reverence him. Nay, tho' the accuſation be not with that candid deſign, but be meant as a reproach; yet if it be true, it ſhould not excite anger at their accuſers, but remorſe, and reformation in themſelves.

Many times the telling a charitable truth has given the provocation.

21. It was the ſaying of a wiſe Man, that he profited more by his enemies than his friends; becauſe they would tell him more roundly of his faults. And this is excellently improv'd by *Plutarch*, in his Tract, *Of the benefits to be reap'd from Enemies:* ſo that even a malicious accuſation may be a kindneſs, and conſequently ought not to be repaid with an injury. But ſuppoſe, in the laſt place, that the aſperſion be not only unkind, but untrue, it will not even then be ſafe to let looſe to their indignation. Firſt, in reſpect of Prudence, an angry vindication ſerving the deſign of the enemy, and helping to ſpread the calumny; whereas a wiſe neglect and diſſembling do's often ſtifle and ſuppreſs it. Secondly, in reſpect of duty, for all that own themſelves Chriſtians, muſt confeſs they are under an obligation to forgive, and not to revenge. Now if they intend to pay a real obedience to this Precept, 'twill be the more eaſie, the ſooner they ſet to it. He that ſees his houſe on fire, will not dally with the flame, much leſs blow, or extend it, reſolving to quench it at laſt. And anger is as little to be truſted, which if once throughly kindled, will ſcarce expire but with the deſtruction of the ſubject it works on.

A reproof tho' unkindly meant, is a benefit.

22. Let therefore the diſoblig'd not look back upon the injury, but forward to thoſe miſchiefs which too ſharp a reſentment may betray them to: let them conſider, that the boiling of their blood may finally cauſe the effuſion of anothers, and wrath may ſwell into murder. If they would do thus, and inſtead of thoſe magnifying opticks wherein they view the wrong, make uſe of the other end of the perſpective, to diſcern the diſmal event at a diſtance; it would ſure fright them from any nearer approach, would keep them within thoſe bounds which their duty preſcribes them, and thereby acquaint them with a much greater and more ingenious pleaſure than their higheſt revenge can give them: I mean that of forgiving injuries, and obliging the injurious. This is a pleaſure ſo pure and refined, ſo noble and heroick, that none but rational natures are capable of it; whereas that of Spight and Revenge (if it can be call'd a pleaſure) is a meer beſtial one; every the moſt contemptible animal can be angry when 'tis moleſted, and endeavour to return the miſchief.

The injury of an unkindneſs is far leſs than that of reſentment.

Compaſſion is the appropriate temper of men, and Almighty God; but ferity the worſt of beaſts.

23. It ſhould therefore, methinks, be an eaſy determination, whether to embrace that Clemency and Compaſſion which we ſee exemplified in the wiſeſt and beſt of men, nay in the Omniſcient Immortal God, or that ſavage fierceneſs of the ignobleſt creatures. This is certain, that no woman would be content to aſſume the outward form of any of thoſe: why then ſhould they ſubject their nobler part, the mind, to ſuch a transformation? For as there are no monſters ſo deformed, as thoſe which are compounded of man and beaſt: ſo among them all, nothing can be more unnatural, more odious, than a Woman-Tiger. I conclude all with the advice of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 17. 14. *The beginning of ſtrife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention before it be medled with.* When once a breach is made upon the ſpirit by immoderate anger, all the conſequent miſchiefs will flow in, like a rapid ſtream when the banks are broken down; nor is there any way to prevent it, but by keeping the mounds entire, preſerving that Tenderneſs and Compaſſion which God and Nature do equally inforce and recommend.

SECT. IV.

Of Affability.

Affability a virtue peculiarly appropriate to Women of quality.

1. IN the next place we may reckon Affability and Courteſie; which as it is amiable in all, ſo it is ſingularly ſo in women of Quality, and more univerſally neceſſary in them than in the other Sex. For men have often charges and employments which do juſtify, nay perhaps require ſomewhat of ſternneſs and auſterity; but women ordinarily have few or no occaſions of it, and thoſe who have well digeſted the former Lectures of Meekneſs and Compaſſion, will not be apt to put it on unneceſſarily. Now Affability may be conſidered either as a meer human Accompliſhment, or as a divine Virtue; in either notion 'tis commendable, but 'tis the latter that gives it the higheſt Excellence and Perfection.

Its Extraction is generous.

2. To begin with the firſt notion of it, we may take an eſtimate of its worth by its Cauſe, and by its Effects. For its Cauſe, it derives it ſelf either from a native candour and generoſity of mind, or from a noble and ingenuous Education, or ſomething joyntly from both; and theſe are as good Originals as any thing meerly moral can flow from. And that theſe are indeed its ſources, common Experience will atteſt: thoſe of the greateſt Minds, and beſt Extractions, being uſually moſt condeſcending and obliging; whereas thoſe of moſt abject Spirits and Birth, are the moſt inſulting and imperious. *Alexander* the Great, tho' terrible in the field, yet was of a gentle, complaiſant converſation, familiarly treating thoſe about him: yet *Criſpinus*, *Narciſſus*, *Nymphidius*, and other enfranchiſed bondmen, we find inſolently trampling upon the Roman Senators and Conſuls. 'Tis therefore a great errour for Perſons of Honour, to think they acquire a reverence by putting on a ſupercilious gravity, looking coily and diſdainfully upon all about them; 'tis ſo far from that, that it gives a ſuſpicion that 'tis but a pageantry of greatneſs, ſome muſhrom newly ſprung up, that ſtands ſo ſtiff, and ſwells ſo much. But inſtead of teaching others to keep their diſtance, this faſtidious diſdain invites them to a

cloſer inſpection, that if there be any flaw either in their life or birth,'twill be ſure to be diſcovered, there being no ſuch prying inquiſitor as curioſity, when 'tis egg'd on by a ſenſe of contempt.

Affability the cheapeſt price of love.

3. On the other ſide, if we conſider the effects of Courteſie, they are quite contrary; it endears to all, and often keeps up a Reputation in ſpight of many blemiſhes: a kind look or word from a Superior is ſtrangely charming, and inſenſibly ſteals away men's hearts from them. This the Wiſe man refers to, *Ecclus.* 18 16. when he prefers a Word before a Gift. And 'tis *Plutarch*'s obſervation of *Cleomenes* King of *Sparta*, that when the Grecians compared his Affability and eaſineſs of Acceſs with the ſullen ſtate and Pride of other Princes, they were ſo enamour'd with it, that they judged him only worthy to be a King. And as there is no certainer, ſo alſo no cheaper way of gaining love: a friendly ſalutation is as eaſy as a frown or reproach; and that kindneſs may be preſerv'd by them, which if once forfeited, will not at a far greater price be recovered.

Conſidering human viciſſitudes, the moſt prudent.

4. Beſides, when human viciſſitudes are conſidered, it may be a point of Prudence too; the greateſt Perſons may ſometimes want aſſiſtance from the meaneſt; nay ſometimes the face of affairs is quite changed, and the wheel of Fortune turns them loweſt that were uppermoſt, and proportionably elevates the meaneſt. 'Tis Wiſdom therefore ſo to treat all, as to leave no impreſſions of unkindneſs, ſince none is ſo deſpicable, but may poſſibly at one time or other have an opportunity to retaliate. 'Twas therefore a prudent as well as an equitable reſolution of the Emperour, who ſaid he would ſo entertain the addreſſes of his Subjects, as, if he were a Subject, he would wiſh the Prince ſhould entertain him: a rule very worthy to ſway all Perſons of Honour in their intercourſe with others. And ſince even among Perſons in Command there are degrees, and ſhe which is Superior to one, is Inferior to another; they have a ready way to compare the civility they pay, with that they expect. Let therefore one who meets with a cold, neglectful Treatment from any above her, examine her own reſentments, and then reflect, that if ſhe give the like to thoſe below her, they will doubtleſs have the ſame ſenſe; and therefore let her reſolve never to offer what ſhe ſo much diſlikes to bear: and ſhe that do's thus, that makes ſuch inferences, will convert an Injury into a Benefit: civilize her ſelf by the rudeneſs of others, and make that ill nurture her own diſcipline.

Affability is ennobled by its alliance with Humility.

5. But hitherto we conſider affability only in its ethnick dreſs, as it is a human ornament; 'twill appear yet more enamouring upon a ſecond view, when we look on it as bearing the impreſs of the Sanctuary, as a divine Virtue. And that it is capable of being ſo, we have the authority of St. *Paul*, who inſerts it in the number of thoſe Chriſtian Graces which he recommends to his Roman Proſelytes; *Condeſcend to them of low eſtate, Rom.* 12. 16. And that we may the better diſcern its value, 'tis obſervable that he links it with the moſt eminent Virtue of Humility; for it immediately follows his Precept of *be not high minded*. Indeed 'tis not only joyned with it as a Friend or Allie, but deriv'd from it as its ſtock and Principle: and certainly a more divine extraction it cannot have, Humility being the *Alpha* and *Omega* of Virtues, that which laies the foundation (without which the moſt towring Structure will but cruſh it ſelf with its own weight) and that which perfects and conſummates the buildind alſo, ſecures and crowns all other Graces; which when they are moſt verdant and flouriſhing, are like *Jonah*'s gourd, that may afford ſome ſha-

dow and refreſhment for a while, but are apt to breed that worm which will deſtroy them. When once they are ſmitten with Pride, they inſtantly fade and wither; ſo neceſſary is Humility both for the acquiring and conſerving all that is good in us.

Which is a better motive than civility or prudence.

6. We may therefore conclude, that Courteſie and Obligingneſs of behaviour which proceeds from thence, is in reſpect of its ſpring and original, infinitely to be prefer'd before that which deſcends from no higher ſtock than natural or prudential motives. And ſince 'tis natural for every production to have ſome ſimilitude to that which produces it, we ſhall find it no leſs excellent in reſpect of its properties than its deſcent. I ſhall inſtance only in two, Sincerity, and Conſtancy.

Affability ought to be ſincere.

7. For the firſt, as far as Affability partakes of Humility, it muſt of Sincerity alſo, that being a virtue whoſe very elements are plainneſs and ſimplicity: for as it has no deſigns which want a cover, ſo it needs none of thoſe ſubtilties and ſimulations, thoſe pretences and artifices requiſite to thoſe that do. 'Tis the precept of the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 2. 3. *In lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem others better than himſelf*: where we ſee 'tis the nature of a lowly mind to transfer that eſteem to others which he ſubſtracts from himſelf: now where ſuch an eſteem is planted in the heart, it verifies all the expreſſions and outward ſignifications of reſpect, and renders the greateſt condeſcenſions (which to an inſolent humour may ſeem extravagant and affected) real and unfeigned.

Elſe it may be the practice of Abſalom *to ſteal hearts to ill purpoſes.*

8. On the contrary, that Courteſie which derives no higher than from meer human principles, is not much to be confided in. 'Tis the Pſalmiſt's affirmation *that all men are liars*: and therefore there is more than a poſſibility of deceit in their faireſt ſhews. Sometimes we know ſmooth and plauſible addreſſes have been deſign'd as the ſtale to vile and treacherous practices. The extraordinary blandiſhments and endearing behaviour of *Abſalom* to the people, was only to *ſteal their hearts*, and advance his intended rebellion, 2 *Sam.* 15.6. and *David* tells us of ſome, *whoſe words were ſofter than butter, having war in the heart, whoſe words were ſmoother than oyl, and yet were very ſwords*, *Pſal.* 55. 21. and God knows this age has not ſo much improv'd in ſincerity, that we ſhould think the ſame Scenes are not daily acted over among us.

There is a barbarous ſhew of Affability, to expoſe and deride.

9. But beſides all the blacker projects of this kind, which nothing but the event can detect, there is a lower ſort of this treachery, which is viſible, nay ſo avowed, that it is one of the moſt common ſubjects of mirth and entertainment, I mean that of ſcoffing and deriſion, a thing too frequent among all, but I fear I may ſay very peculiarly among Ladies, thoſe at leaſt of the modiſh ſort, their very civilities and careſſes being often deſign'd to gain matter of ſcorn and laughter. Mutual viſits we know are an expreſſion of reſpect, and ſhould flow from a real kindneſs, but if thoſe now in uſe be ſifted, how few will be found of that make? They are at the beſt formal, a tribute rather paid to cuſtom than friendſhip, and many go to ſee thoſe, for whom they are perfectly indifferent whether they find them alive or dead, well or ſick. Nay very often they are worſe than thus, deſign'd only to make obſervations, to bolt out ſomething ridiculous wherewith to ſport themſelves as ſoon as they are gone; and leſt the inqueſt ſhould return with a *non inventus*, they will accept of the ſlighteſt diſcoveries, the leaſt miſplacing of a word, nay of a hair, ſhall be theme enough for a Comedy.

A diſcipline uſually inflicted on Ladies of country breeding.

10. But if a poor Country Gentlewoman fall within their circuit, what a ſtock of mirth do's ſhe afford them, how curiouſly do they anatomize every part of her dreſs, her meen, her dialect, nay perhaps to improve the Scene, will recommend yet greater abſurdities to her, under the notion of the Mode, that ſo ſhe may be the more ample Subject of their ſcorn. Such viſits as theſe are but inſiduous intruſions, the inſinuations of a ſpy rather than the good office of a neighbour: and when 'tis remembred how great a portion of ſome womens time is ſpent in this kind of diverſion, we muſt conclude there have a multitude of acts gon to make up the habit. I wiſh they would ſeriouſly reflect on it, and unravel that injurious mirth by a penitential ſadneſs, and either ſpend their time better than in viſiting, or elſe direct their viſits to better purpoſes. And this they would certainly do if they would exchange their meer popular civilities (that kind of paint and varniſh in manners) for that true Chriſtian condeſcenſion, which admits of no deceit, but is as tranſparent as *Druſus* wiſht his houſe ſhould be, that has no ſecret ſcrues and ſprings, to move the eyes or tongue a contrary way from the heart, but is in reality all that it pretends to be.

Affability is to be conſtant.

11. A ſecond property of it is Conſtancy, for as it is true to others, ſo it is to its ſelf; 'tis founded on the ſolideſt of Virtues, and is not ſubject to thoſe light and giddy uncertainties, that the vulgar civilities are. For he that out of a diſeſteem of his proper worth, has placed himſelf in a ſtate of inferiority, will think it not an arbitrary matter, but a juſt debt to pay a reſpect to thoſe he thinks his betters; and an humble mind will in every body find ſomething or other to prefer to himſelf. So that he acts upon a fixt principle, and is not in danger of thoſe contradictions in his manners, which ſhall render him one day ſweet and affable, and another ſowre and moroſe. But ſuch mutations are frequently incident to thoſe, who are ſway'd by other motives, ſometimes an intereſt changes, and then the moſt fawning Sycophant can tranſplant his flatteries, and court a new Patron, yea many times to the deſpight and vilifying of the old.

Not altering with the varieties of fortune,

12. Sometimes again, fortune may change: a man may fall from a proſperous to an adverſe ſtate, and then thoſe who were prodigal of their civilities whilſt he needed nothing elſe, will withdraw even thoſe from him, leſt they ſhould encourage him to demand ſomething more. An experiment of this *Job* made in his friends (or rather flatterers) whom he fitly compares to winter brooks, running over when not needed, but quite dry when they are.

Or of fancy and humour.

13. But the moſt frequent change is that of fancy and humour, which has a much more general ſway than reaſon and judgment. This is ſo obſervable in the vulgar rabble, that often in an inſtant they will ſhift paſſions, and hate this hour what they doted on the laſt. Of this all popular States have afforded many coſtly experiments, but we need not go farther than the ſacred Story, where we find the Acclamations and *Hoſannahs* of the multitude, quickly converted into *crucifie him, crucifie him.* This levity of mind has been obſerved ſo incident to women, that 'tis become almoſt proverbial; for by how much their paſſions are more violent, they are commonly the leſs laſting, and as they are reckon'd among thoſe colder bodies that are particularly influenced by the Moon, ſo they ſeem to bear a great reſemblance to her in her viciſſitudes and changes; yet ſtill with a greater degree of uncertainty: for ſhe in all her revolutions obſerves ſome conſtant periods, and we can tell her in wane when ſhe will

be at full, ſo that ſhe has a kind of certainty even in her planetary errours; but what Ephemerides can be framed for ſome women's humours? Who can tell how long the preſent will laſt? and what will be the next that will ſucceed?

Or deficiency in the arts of flattery.

14. I need not bring inſtances of their inconſtancy from that common place of paſſionate Widows, who have let a new love ſail even thro' thoſe floods of tears wherewith they bewailed the old. For (beſides that that is a caſe wherein poſſibly they may find matter enough for retortion) it is here a little wide from my purpoſe, which deſigns no farther inquiſition than into their ordinary converſation, wherein that love of variety which is ſo remarkable in their habit, their diet, their diverſions, extends it ſelf often to their company, their freindſhips alſo and converſe. Thoſe intimacies which they cheriſht lately, quickly grow deſpicable, and at laſt nauſeous, and conſequently their behaviour falls from kind and civil, to cold and diſdainfull. I doubt not this has often been prov'd by many of their humble companions, which officiouſly attend them, who cannot always fix themſelves, no not by thoſe flatteries that firſt introduc'd them. Some new comer perhaps has better refined the Art, and do's the ſame thing more acutely and ingeniouſly, and then the old one is to be turn'd off as too groſs a Sycophant. Or if they have been ſo happy as to light upon ſome of a more generous temper, who inſtead of a ſervile compliance with their humour, and high characters of their worth, entertain them with the true images of themſelves, and endeavour to make what others only ſpeak them, this is that unpardonable crime which forfeits all degrees of favour, and do's not only avert but incenſe. A faithful Monitor is as unacceptable as a true Looking-glaſs to a deformed perſon, which at the beſt will be ſet aſide, and eſcapes well if not broken; and while great Perſons diſpenſe their favours or their frowns by ſuch perverſe meaſures as theſe, they will be ſure to do it unjuſtly, as well as unconſtantly.

Humility is the beſt preſervative againſt flattery.

15. I am far from making this an univerſal charge. I know there are Women of the higheſt quality, that guide themſelves by other rules, that are deaf to all the ſongs of *Sirens*, and have the prudence to value a ſeaſonable reproof before the moſt extravagant Panegyrick: but this is owing to that Humility which I am now recommending, without which 'tis as impoſſible for Greatneſs to be proof againſt flattery, as it is for a Pinnace with ſpreading ſails, and a violent guſt of wind, to ſail ſteddily without ballaſt. And the frequent want of this is it which makes it no leſs frequent to ſee thoſe unevenneſſes and inequalities in behaviour; thoſe partialities in diſpenſing even the commoneſt civilities, which I have now preſented.

That vulture vice, that picks out firſt the eyes of the creature deſign'd for a prey.

16. And ſure 'tis none of the meaneſt attributes due to that excellent virtue of Humility, that it can thus fix and poiſe the mind, cure thoſe vertigo's and giddy humours incident to thoſe who are mounted aloft: and above all, that it is a ſure Antidote againſt the moſt inſinuating poiſon of Flattery, a holy ſpell or amulet againſt the venom of a Paraſite, which the Philoſopher juſtly calls the worſt of tame beaſts, as a Detractor is of wild: He being indeed a kind of Vulture, in the way of ſeizure no leſs than ravine, who firſt picks out the eyes of that which he deſigns to prey upon, ſuffering not the perſon concern'd to ſee any thing of that deſtruction which he is to feel. And certainly none of the ominous birds, no night-raven or ſcreech-owl can bode half ſo diſmally as theſe domeſtick birds of prey, which are not only preſages, but inſtruments of ruin wheresoever they haunt.

17. 'Tis therefore the univerſal concern of thoſe that are great and proſperous to chaſe them away, as *Abraham* did the Fowls from his Sacrifice, *Gen.* 15. 11. but yet more peculiarly ſo of thoſe to whom fortune has given a ſudden riſe and unexpected grandeur, they being of all others the moſt obnoxious to this ſort of Harpies. The ſurprizes of Proſperity do no leſs diſturb the judgment than thoſe of Adverſity: and as one who is in an inſtant ſnatcht up to ſome high Tower, is ſo amazed to ſee himſelf there, that he has no juſt meaſure of the altitude, but thinks every thing farther below him than it is: ſo they that aſcend to Greatneſs by ſwift and rapid motions, have their heads ſo turned, that they are apt to overvalue it, and to look with contempt on thoſe who before perhaps they thought worth their Envy. And on a mind thus prepared, flattery may make any impreſſions, it ſuborning even Providence as a witneſs on its ſide, and inferring from the Dignities obtain'd, the tranſcending merit of the obtainer: a piece of Sophiſtry which the ſlighteſt obſerver may eaſily confute, all Ages giving inſtances of thoſe whoſe Vices have preferr'd them, and by a ſtrange Chymiſtry have extracted Honour out of infamous acts. Yet to a mind poſſeſt with its own admiration, this ſhall paſs for a demonſtration: ſo treacherous a thing is Pride, that it combines with all who deſign to cheat us. And indeed 'tis not only an acceſſary, but the principal; none being in danger by others flatteries, who are not firſt ſeduced by their own.

They who come to unexpected greatneſs are moſt obnoxious to flattery.

18. It will therefore be a point of Wiſdom for all Perſons of Honour to encreaſe their caution with their Fortune; and as they multiply their Retinues without, ſo eſpecially to enforce their Guard within, that they become not ſlaves to their own Greatneſs, fix not themſelves in ſuch a poſture of State, as to become immoveable to all the offices of Humanity and Civility; nor think that their admiſſion to Greatneſs is upon the ſame terms on which the Jews were wont to receive their Proſelytes, that they muſt renounce all their former relations; but to remember that they differ no more from others than as a counter ſet in the place of thouſands or hundreds do's from one in the place of tens or units. A little tranſpoſition may quite alter the caſe; or however when they are all taken off the ſcore, they are then indiſcriminately tumbled together, and one has no precedence of another, either in place or value. So undiſcernable will be the difference between the greateſt Queen and the meaneſt Servant, when Death, that great Leveller, ſhall have mixt them; there will be no inquiſition in the Grave, who came embalm'd or perfum'd thither: And, as a Learned man ſays, The Ulcers of *Lazarus* will make as good duſt as the Paint of *Jezebel.*

They who are advanc'd ought to encreaſe their caution with their fortune.

19. But I ſhall be thought to have out-run my Subject, or inſtead of that amiable Image of Affability and univerſal Obligingneſs, the great Ornament of Life, introduce the grim figure of Death, that ſullen Executioner, whom no Gifts, no Prayers can mollifie. Yet I cannot yield it wholly impertinent; for as its final ſtroke cures all the infirmities of the body, ſo the foreſight and contemplation of it is as much a Catholicon for all the maladies of the mind; eſpecially that of Inſolence and Diſdain. For ſure they cannot much pride themſelves in any exaltation, that remember they muſt finally fall into the duſt: nor arrogantly deſpiſe others, who conſider that themſelves ſhall one day be inſulted over by worms and inſects. Such mental deſcents into the vault or charnel-houſe, are the beſt diſciplines for the demeanour in other places, according to the admonition of the Wiſe Man: *Remember thy end, and thou ſhalt never do amiſs.*

And above all remember their end.

SECT. V.

Of Piety.

The ſupreme feminine virtue is Piety and Devotion.

1. LAſtly, to compleat and crown all other Excellencies, nothing is ſo proper, ſo neceſſary as Piety and Devotion. This is the ſalt which ſeaſons all Sacrifices; yea the Altar which ſanctifies the Gift, no good (how ſplendid ſoever in the ſight of man) being acceptable to God, till it be thus conſecrated, and have this ſeal of the Sanctuary upon it. This is a Virtue truly Divine, as well in its original as its end; for as it comes from Heaven, (is an afflation of the bleſſed Spirit) ſo it tends thither alſo, and thither raiſes its Votaries. This is it which ſublimates and ſpiritualizes Humanity, defecates and refines it from all the dregs of mortality, and ſo wings our earthly lumpiſh nature, that we can ſoar aloſt to the region of ſpirits, and by its raptures make ſome eſſay of that ſtate of ſeparation, even while we are linked to the Body. This is it which combines us ſo with God, that we have the ſame intereſts, the ſame choices; nay it do's in a ſort communicate and enterchange properties with him; the All-powerful God ſeems impotent and unable to reſiſt its influence, whilſt it inveſts us feeble wretches in a kind of Omnipotence, by engaging him for us who can do all things.

Piety in its utmoſt extent, includes all duty.

2. Now this Piety may be conſider'd either in a larger, or more limited ſenſe: in the former 'tis as wide as the whole ſcheme of Duty, not confin'd to any one act, but extended to all the commands of God. For as the animal Spirit diffuſes it ſelf into all the moſt diſtant members of the body; ſo this more vital Principle has as univerſal an influence on the mind, ſtamps that with ſuch an admiration and reverence of God, ſuch a love and complacency in him, that every act is (at leaſt habitually) deſign'd to obey and glorifie him.

More properly it means the acts of adoration and worſhip.

3. In the more limited ſenſe, Piety is taken for our more immediate intercourſe with God, in things purely divine, as Adorations, Prayers, Aſpirations, and all pantings and breathings of the ſoul after him; and in this notion 'tis more particularly call'd Devotion. And this is comprehended in the other, as a part in the whole; nay indeed as an effect in its cauſe; for where Piety has not firſt form'd and modell'd the ſoul, there can be no true Devotion. External forms of it there may be, but that is but ceremony and pageantry, the moſt ſubmiſſive proſtrations are there but like that of *Dagon* before the Ark, the fall of a lifeleſs trunk; the moſt elevated eyes but a kind of a convulſive motion, and the moſt rigid mortifications, but like the cuttings and launcings of *Baal's* Prieſts. Of this the very Heathens had ſome notion, and therefore in their worſhips had many preparatory ceremonies of luſtration and purifying, as being conſcious of the incongruity, that unholy Perſons ſhould be admitted to Sacred things. And accordingly *Socrates* has excellently (I had almoſt ſaid Evangelically) defin'd, *the beſt way of worſhipping God,* to be *the doing what he commands.* Indeed without this, our Devotion is meer ſtratagem and deſign: we invoke God as we uſe to cajole men, only to ſerve a preſent turn; and of ſuch diſingenuous addreſſes 'tis eaſy to read the event, or if we cannot, *Solomon* will inſtruct us, *Prov.* 15. 8. *The prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

The advantages of the female Sex by the prevalence of the paſſions of fear and love.

4. To treat of the ſeveral branches of Piety in the firſt notion, is not agreeable to the intended brevity of this Treatiſe; nor neceſſary, becauſe there are ſo many diſtinct Tracts extant on that Subject; yet I ſhall the more cloſely to adapt it to my female Readers, obſerve the propriety of it to women, not only as it is their greateſt Ornament and Advantage, but eſpecially as they have ſomewhat more of prediſpoſition towards it in their native temper. God's Laws, which are the rule of Piety, have this common with men's, that they are inforced upon us by the propoſals both of Puniſhments and Rewards, by that means engaging two of our moſt ſenſible paſſions, Fear and Love; and the female Sex being eminent for the pungency of both theſe, they are conſequently the better prepared for the impreſſions of Religion.

Fear is pretended to be the firſt mover in religion.

5. This is ſo much acknowledg'd, that our maſculine Atheiſts make an ill uſe of it, and are willing to think that Religion ows its force only to the impotence of the ſubject on which it works, that 'tis only an impoſition upon the eaſy credulity of women, and are content to allow them the incloſure of it: wherein, tho' they ſufficiently ſhew their contempt of Piety, yet they unawares give a greater honour to that Sex than they intend, whilſt they confeſs it more capable of an aſſimilation to the ſupreme Goodneſs, and of the renewal of God's Image (for to that all Piety is deſign'd) than their own. And therefore women have ſo little reaſon to be aſham'd, that they ought to glory in the conceſſion, and gratefully to celebrate the goodneſs of God to them, who, as he brings light out of darkneſs, ſo converts their natural infirmities into a means of ſpiritual ſtrength, makes the impotencies and defects of their nature ſubſervient to the operation of Grace; and by conſecrating their very Paſſions, makes even thoſe *Gibeonites* ſerviceable to the Tabernacle. But then 'tis to be remembred, that the greater is their obligation to comply with this deſign of God's, to let their paſſions run in the channel he has cut for them; ſo to confine their Fear and Love to ſpiritual Objects, that they make no inordinate eruptions to any thing elſe, but in all their eſtimations of things dreadful or deſirable, to give ſtill the juſt deference to that which is eternal.

Women of quality have a particular obligation to Piety from the advantages of inſtitution.

6. And as Women in General have this advantage towards Piety, and obligation to it; ſo particularly thoſe of Quality, who we may ſuppoſe to have generally a more early inſtitution and inſtruction in it than thoſe of a meaner rank: and beſides, have afterwards more opportunities of being built up in the knowledge of their duty, and (by the help of an ingenuous education) clearer apprehenſions to diſcern it; and when they do ſo, have greater obligations to perform it, both in reſpect of God, of others, and themſelves.

As alſo for their liberal portion of wordly goods.

7. In reſpect of God they have the greateſt tie of gratitude, not only for the common mercies which they partake with the reſt of mankind, but for thoſe peculiar, by which they are differenc'd from others; of which, if they want a juſt value, let them ask themſelves how willing they would be to part with them, how ſhe that has fed delicately, would like to be deſolate in the ſtreet, or *ſhe that has been brought up in Scarlet, to embrace the Dunghill, Lam.* 4. 5. and according to the averſion they find to ſuch a change, let them eſtimate their preſent enjoyment, and the thankfulneſs it exacts.

As alſo for their advantages of doing good to others.

8. Secondly in regard of others, their Piety backt with their ſecular advantages, may be of a more extenſive benefit; they have many opportunities of doing good by their influence on others; or if no way elſe,

yet the ſplendor of their example will by the eminency of their conditions ſhine (as a light on ſome high Tower) more perſpicuouſly, and guide many into the ſame path of Virtue. And certainly 'tis no ſmall obligation that lies on them in this reſpect; for God, who do's nothing without an end worthy of his Wiſdom, can never be thought to have ſelected ſome perſons as the objects of his bounty, meerly that they may ſwill and glut themſelves with ſenſual pleaſures. No doubtleſs, he that is the great Maſter of the Univerſe, diſpoſes all things for common benefit; and therefore, if He hath plac'd ſome in a higher Orb than others, it is that they may have an auſpicious influence on thoſe below them; and if they fail in this, they are no longer Stars but Comets, things of ominous and unlucky abode to all about them. I might enlarge on this Subject, but having done it already in the Gentleman's Calling, I ſuppoſe it unneceſſary, ſince that part is equally adapted to both Sexes.

Likewiſe for their greater temptations,

9. In the laſt place, they have all obligations to Piety, in reſpect of themſelves, and that in two conſiderations; the firſt, of their preſent danger; the ſecond, of their final account. For their danger, 'tis evident they do not more out-number their inferiors in any thing than in the opportunities, nay ſollicitations to ſin. Wealth and Honour have many ſnares, and which is worſe, do often diſpoſe the mind to ſuch a heedleſs ſecurity, that it takes no care to avoid them: and as in the body, the diſeaſes of repletion are far more numerous than thoſe of emptineſs, ſo the mind is oftner vitiated by Affluence and Proſperity, than by Indigence and Adverſity. It becomes therefore thoſe who are ſo ſurrounded with enemies, to fortifie themſelves: and that they can no way do, but by a ſincere Piety, that *whole Armor of God* which the Apoſtle deſcribes, *Eph.* 6. 13. *by which alone they may repell all the darts of temptations*; nay not only ward the blow, but wreſt the weapon out of Satan's hand, ſo that when he urges to them the opportunities, the impunity which their wealth and greatneſs gives them to be bad, they may retort his argument, and by a wholſomer inference collect thence their great obligation to be good; and that not only upon the ſcore of Gratitude (tho' that were enough to an ingenuous ſoul) but in the ſecond place of Intereſt alſo, in reſpect of that account they muſt finally give. For tho' God be not an unjuſt exactor to reap where he has not ſowed, yet he is not ſo negligently profuſe, as to do that which no prudent man will do, ſcatter his goods promiſcuouſly, without taking notice where they fall; but as he diſpences all things by a particular Providence, ſo he do's it to a particular end, and will exact as particular an account how that end has been complied with.

And larger final account.

10. It is a ſmart exprobration of God's to *Iſrael*, *Ezek.* 16, 17, 18, 19. that ſhe had ſacrilegiouſly emploied his *ſilver and gold, his oil, his flower and hony which he had given her in the ſervice of her Idols*: by which as we may ſee he takes notice how we diſpoſe of our temporal poſſeſſions, ſo it ſhews us how the inditement will proceed againſt all thoſe who ſo pervert their uſe. With what confuſion muſt they appear at the great Audit who can give no other account of their receits, but that they conſum'd them upon their luſts, waged war againſt God with his own treaſure, and have been as well thieves as rebels? What a Luciferian fall will they have from their honors, who have endeavor'd to undermine God's? thought themſelves too great to pay him homage, and by their profane and vicious example, induced a contempt of him. In ſhort, what a retaliation of inverſions will there then be? thoſe that have turn'd Grace into wantonneſs, converted his bounty into the fuel of their pride and luxury, ſhall

then have their glory turn'd into ſhame, their riots and exceſſes into the want of a drop of water, and ſhall retain nothing of their greatneſs, but the guilt, the grating remembrance of having abuſed thoſe temporal bleſſings, which if well managed, might have received them into everlaſting habitations. How neceſſary then it is for all who have receiv'd ſo much upon account, to be often reflecting on it, examining what charges the great owner has impoſed upon ſo ample an income? what God requires of them for whom he hath done ſo much? And this is particularly the buſineſs of Piety, which in all the forementioned reſpects, is as the uſefulleſt, ſo the nobleſt accompliſhment of greatneſs.

11. And ſuch it hath been accounted 'till this profane Age of ours, which has remov'd all the boundaries of the former, reverſt even the inſtincts of nature, and will not leave us ſo much of Religion as had the very worſt of Heathens. For how erroneous ſoever they were in the choice of their Deities, they always honour'd and reverenc'd thoſe they choſe, committed moſt of their enormites in obedience, not in affront to them: did not aſſign them votaries as *Jeroboam* did his Prieſts of the meaneſt of the people, but thought themſelves dignified by their ſervice, and eſteem'd it an infamy not to be pious. But alas! now adays we make other eſtimates, Religion is ſo abject, ſo contemptible a thing, as is thought fit to influence none that are great either in parts or quality: and therefore tho' too many are willing to appropriate it to women, upon the firſt account, *as the Goſpel is the fooliſhneſs of preaching*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. yet they make exceptions upon the latter, and are not willing to afford it any of the nobler Proſelytes even of that Sex.

'Tis the maſtery of this age that Religion is thought an abject contemptible thing.

12. I doubt not there are many Lectures read to ſuch, to fortifie them againſt all impreſſions of Piety, to raze out the common notion of a God, and in order to that, depoſe his Vicegerent within them, diſcard their conſcience, that unmannerly inmate, which is ſtill ſpeaking what they have no mind to hear, and will be apt ſometimes to queſtion their grand principle, and tell them they have ſouls. And truly 'tis no wonder if the abetters of Atheiſm take this courſe; for ſince they have no ſolid foundation of truth or reaſon, 'tis but neceſſary they ſupport their Party by Authority, the countenance and applauſe of great Perſons; and God knows they have too much ſucceeded in the deſign. But, in the mean time, what ſecurity do they give for the truth of their pretenſions? We know 'tis ſtill required of thoſe that will practice upon other people's concerns, that they put in caution to ſecure the owner from damage. But alas! what gage can they give for a ſoul? Who can contrive a form of Indemnity where that is the thing hazarded?

The patrons of Atheiſm wanting the ſupport of reaſon, are ſtudious to abet their party by the authority of great perſons.

13. 'Tis eaſy indeed for one of theſe Apoſtles of *Satan*, to tell a Lady that ſhe has nothing to do but to indulge to her pleaſure; that 'tis the extreameſt folly to be frighted from a preſent enjoyment, by a fear of I know not what future ſmart; that God, and Sin, and Hell, are but names, certain Mormos and Bug-bears conjur'd up by Divines, to work upon her fear, and abuſe her credulity. This, and much more of this kind may be ſaid, and I doubt not often is; but all this while the queſtion is begg'd, and a ſtrong affirmation muſt paſs for proof: for I defie all the Doctors of Atheiſm to make any demonſtration of their Tenet; and yet, tho' they pretend to no demonſtration themſelves, Religion muſt be condemned meerly for the want of it: that is for not making ſpiritual things liable to ſenſe, for diſtinguiſhing between Belief and Science; which is indeed for doing the moſt reaſonable thing in the world. *viz.* the remitting every

Alſo by ſenſual topicks, and bold aſſertings.

object to the trial of its proper faculty: and they who ſuſpect it upon that account, may by the ſame kind of Logick wrangle us out of all our ſenſes, may perſwade us we hear nothing, becauſe the eye diſcerns not ſounds, that we taſte not, becauſe the ear underſtands not guſts and ſapors, and ſo on to the reſt.

They who decry the weakneſs of believing, at the inſtant expect an implicit aſſent to their dictates.

14. And yet this is the bottom of thoſe Arguments which the great pretenders to Reaſon make againſt Religion; and in the mean time have ſo little ingenuity as to exclaim on the light credulity of fools and women, that embrace the dictates of faith, whilſt at the ſame inſtant they exact a more implicit aſſent to their negative Articles, their no Religion. A ſtrange magiſterial confidence ſo to impoſe on this Age what is ſo univerſally contradictory to all former, and to the common verdict of mankind. For 'tis obſervable thro' all the ſucceſſions of men, that there were never any ſociety, any collective body of Atheiſts. A ſingle one perhaps might here and there be found (as we ſee ſometimes monſters or miſſhapen births) but for the generality they had always ſuch inſtincts of a Deity, that they never thought they ran far enough from Atheiſm; but rather choſe to multiply their Gods, to have too many than none at all: nay were apt to deſcend to the adoration of things below themſelves, rather than to renounce the power above them. By which we may ſee that the notion of a God is the moſt indelible character of natural Reaſon; and therefore whatever pretence our Atheiſts make to ratiocination and deep diſcourſe, it is none of that primitive fundamental reaſon coetaneous with our humanity; but is indeed a reaſon fit only for thoſe who own themſelves like the beaſts that periſh.

The tenets of Atheiſts if probable in any degree; cannot be ſafe.

15. But admit we could be more bountiful to them, and allow their opinion an equal probability with our Faith, yet even this could never juſtifie any body in point of Prudence, that ſhould adhere to them. Common diſcretion teaches us that where two propoſitions have an equal appearance of truth, there is no rational inducement to prefer one before the other, till we have examin'd the conſequences, and find ſomething in the one which may over-poiſe and outweigh the contrary. Now in all things that concern practice, there are no motives ſo conſiderable, either to invite or avert, as Advantage or Danger.

A parallel of the intereſts of the Atheiſt,

16. Let us apply this to the preſent caſe, and examin the pretenſions of the Atheiſt and the Chriſtian in both reſpects. But firſt we are to remember, that both Advantage and Danger are to be viewed under a double notion, either as preſent or as future. The former is the Atheiſt's moſt proper ſubject, and indeed all he can pertinently ſpeak to, who profeſſes himſelf only a man of this world. Here he will tell us that the disbelief of God and another life, is the great enfranchiſer of mankind, ſets us at liberty from that thraldom, thoſe Bonds wherewith our ſuperſtitious fears had fetter'd us, that it ſuperſedes all thoſe nice and perplexing inquiries of lawful and unlawful, and reduces all our inquiſitions only to this one, how we ſhall moſt pleaſe our ſelves. The glutton need not put a knife to his throat, but is only to put an edge upon his palate. The drunkard need not refrain his cups, but only take care that they be filled with the moſt delicious liquor. The wanton need not pull out his eye, but only contrive to poſſeſs what that tempts him to deſire; and in a word none of our appetites need be reſtrain'd, but ſatisfied. And this uncontroul'd licentiouſneſs, this brutiſh liberty, is that *ſummum bonum*, that ſupreme happineſs which they propoſe to themſelves, and to which they invite others.

And the pious.

17. On the other ſide, the Chriſtian is not without his claim to a preſent advantage, tho' of a far differing nature: he is not ſo prepoſterous as to think it a preferment to ſink below his kind; to aſpire to an aſſimilation with meer animals, which is the utmoſt the former amounts to, but he propoſes to himſelf the ſatisfaction of a man; thoſe delights which may entertain his Reaſon not his Senſe, which conſiſt in the rectitude of a well inform'd Mind. His Religion is the perfecteſt Scheme of Morality, and makes him a Philoſopher without the help of the Schools, it teaches him the art of ſubduing his appetites, calming his paſſions, and in a word makes him Lord of himſelf; and by that gives him all the pleaſures which reſult from ſuch a Soveraignty. Nor is he totally void even of the pleaſures of ſenſe, which in many inſtances are greater to him than to thoſe that moſt court them Temperance cooks his courſeſt diet to a greater guſt, than all their ſtudied mixtures; Chaſtity makes one lawful embrace more grateful to him, than all the nauſeating variety of their unbounded luſts; and Contentment ſwells his mite into a talent, makes him richer than the *Indies* would do if he deſired beyond them. Nor is it a contemptible benefit that his Moderation gives him an immunity from thoſe ſenſitive pains which oft bring up the rear of inordinate ſenſual pleaſures. So that his condition even ſet in the worſt light, in that very particular wherein the Atheiſt moſt triumphs over him, is not ſo deplorable as 'tis repreſented.

The advantage of the pious in reſpect of pleaſure.

18. But if it were, he has pleaſures that would infinitly overwhelm that ſmart, and that not only in his reaſon (as hath been ſaid before) but in his more ſublime diviner part, ſuch irradiations from above, ſuch antepaſts of his future bliſs, ſuch acquieſcence in a calm and ſerene conſcience, as is very cheaply bought with all he can ſuffer here. I know the profane laugh at theſe things as Chimeras and the illuſions of a prepoſſeſs'd fancy (and truly if they were ſo, they might yet come in a balance with many of their pleaſures which are as much owing to opinion and imagination:) but if we conſider what ſupports they have given under the heavieſt preſſures, how they enabled the primitive Martyrs, not only to ſuffer, but even to court all that is formidable to human nature, we cannot think that a meer phantaſtick imaginary joy could deceive the ſenſe of ſuch real, ſuch acute torments. And tho' in this great declination of Zeal, there be perhaps few that can pretend to thoſe higher degrees of ſpiritual raptures, yet certainly were the votes of all devout perſons collected, they would all concur in this teſtimony, that even in the common offices of Piety, the ordinary diſcharge of a good Conſcience, there is an infinitly greater complacence, a higher guſt and reliſh than in all the pleaſures of Senſe. But of this the moſt irrefragable witneſſes are thoſe who from great voluptuaries have turn'd devotes; and I dare appeal to their experience, whether of the two ſtates is the moſt pleaſant. I wiſh thoſe who will not believe this on others words, would themſelves make the trial, and 'till they do ſo, they are notoriouſly unjuſt to pronounce that a fiction, of whoſe reality they refuſe to make proof.

On the account of Eternity.

19. By what hath been ſaid, ſome eſtimate may be made which bids faireſt (the Atheiſt or Chriſtian) as to preſent temporal felicity: but alas! what an allay, what a damp is it to felicity to ſay 'tis temporal; yet we may give it a term below that, and ſay 'tis momentary. For ſince our life is ſo, nothing that depends on that can be otherwiſe, and yet in this ſhallow bottom the irreligious embark their all. For, as to all future advantage, 'tis their principle to diſclaim it, they diſcern *no reward for*

blameleſs ſouls, *Wiſd.* 2.22. So that in this particular the Chriſtian do's not compare with, but triumph over them. *He knows that if his earthly houſe of this Tabernacle be diſſolv'd, he hath a building of God*; *an Houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. That when he parts with his life, he do's not reſign his happineſs, but ſhall receive it infinitely improv'd both in degree and duration. And now certainly 'tis viſible enough which opinion propoſes the fairer hopes, and conſequently which (ſuppoſing but an equal probability of truth) is the moſt inviting.

The parallel between the future proſpects of the Atheiſt and pious.

20. But ſome ſpirits there are ſo ignoble, that the moſt glorious Prize cannot animate them; that like a ſwine, the muſcles of whoſe eyes, they ſay, permit him not to look upwards, are not concerned in all the felicities above, but would at a venture reſign their ſhare in thoſe, ſo they may ſecurely enjoy their husk and draff. But yet even thoſe who are uncapable of the more generous reſentments, may be apt enough to the more ſervile; and danger may fright, tho' glory cannot allure them. It concerns ſuch therefore to compare the miſchiefs which each Opinion threatens to their oppoſits, and from thence make an eſtimate which is ſafeſt to be choſen. And here let the Atheiſt himſelf caſt up the account of the dangers conſequent to Chriſtianity, and it can all amount but to this, the deprivation (or rather moderation) of ſome preſent ſenſual Pleaſures, or the incurring of ſome preſent ſenſitive Pains; the former in the daily exerciſe of Temperance and Mortification; the latter, (more rarely and oftner in purpoſe than act) the ſuffering for Righteouſneſs ſake. And both theſe the Chriſtian ballances, nay out-weighs by two more important preſent hazards on the other ſide. To the former, he oppoſes the danger of being enſlav'd to the brutiſh part of a man's ſelf, a thing ſo deplorable even in the judgment of humanity, that all Writers of Ethicks have uniformly declar'd no ſervility to be ſo ſordid and intolerable, as that of the vicious man to his Paſſions and Luſts. To the latter, he confronts the miſchief of being a ſlave to every man elſe; for ſuch he certainly is, whom the fear of ſuffering can baffle out of any thing he thinks juſt and honeſt. For if all the men in the World could ſucceſſively have the power to afflict him, they would have alſo to command and rule him; and what can be more abject, more below the dignity of human nature, than to have a ſpirit always prepar'd for ſuch a ſervitude? Beſides, even the utmoſt ſufferings which Chriſtianity can at any time require, is outvied daily by the effects of Luxury and Rage; and for one that has opportunity to be a Martyr for his God, thouſands become ſo to their Vices.

And the manifeſt advantage of the pious.

21. If from the preſent we look forward to future dangers, the Atheiſt muſt here be perfectly ſilent; he cannot ſay that the Chriſtian after this life ſhall be in any worſe eſtate than himſelf, ſince he concludes they ſhall both be the ſame nothing: but the Chriſtian threatens him with a more diſmal ſtate. He allows him indeed a being, yea an eternal one; but it is only ſuch as qualifies him for a miſery as eternal; the worm that never dies, the fire unquenchable, where all the exceſſes of his ſhort Pleaſures ſhall be reveng'd with more exceſſive, endleſs Torments: his ſenſes which were here the only Organs of his felicity, ſhall then be (tho' not the only) the very ſenſible mediums of his wretchedneſs; and that Conſcience which he here ſuſpended from its office, ſhall then take out its arrears, and return all its ſtifled admonitions in perpetual horrours, and deſperate upbraidings. I need not now ſure ask on which ſide the greater danger lies.

If common prudence be appeal'd to, in like ſecular circumſtances the Atheiſt would determine againſt himſelf.

22. To conclude, the reſult of all is, that the tranſitory Pleaſures of the Atheiſt are over-poiſed even by the preſent Satisfactions of the Pious. And the eternity of unbounded, unconceivable joys he expects hereafter, comes in *ex abundanti*, having nothing on the other ſide that offers at a competition with it. And at the very ſame rate of proportion we have ſeen the dangers alſo are ſo, that we can eaſily compute the utmoſt miſchief our Chriſtianity can do us, if it ſhould be falſe; but the damage of the other is ineſtimable, both for the penalty of Loſs and Senſe. I may now appeal to common Prudence to judge of the vaſt inequality, and to pronounce, that ſure there had need be ſome great evidence of truth on the Atheiſt's ſide, to preponderate all theſe diſadvantages. Indeed, nothing much below a demonſtration can juſtify the choice of ſo dangerous Principles; I am ſure an equal probability can never do it, where the danger is ſo unequal; and were the veriest Atheiſt conſulted in a ſecular caſe of the like circumſtances, he would certainly pronounce him a mad man that ſhould make ſuch an election. How deſperate a phrenzy then is it to do it, without ſo much as that equal probability: nay indeed, without any probability at all? And yet this madneſs ſets up for the monopoly not of Wit only, but Reaſon too; and by confidence and clamor, ſeeks to run down thoſe Arguments it can never confute.

The precedent digreſſion neceſſary for perſons of quality, who are engag'd in promiſcuous converſation.

23. I may be thought here to have made too long a digreſſion from my proper Subject, but I cannot confeſs it ſo; for ſince my preſent buſineſs is to recommend Piety, I can no way do that ſo effectually as by ſhewing its conſonancy to right reaſon, eſpecially conſidering the buſie induſtry now uſed to repreſent it under another form, and to alienate from it thoſe perſons whoſe Greatneſs may give it any luſtre or repute in the World; of which ſort I ſuppoſe there are few more frequently attaqued than Women of Quality, that converſe among thoſe who call themſelves the Wits of the Age; who living in ſo infectious an air, had need of ſome antidotes about them; and if what I have now offer'd, appear not forcible enough, (for it pretends not to the tithe of what may be ſaid on the Subject) yet it may at leaſt do them this ſervice, to put them in mind of what they need, and ſend them to the fuller diſpenſatories of others.

'Tis the Atheiſt's grand maxim that none who profeſſes Divinity ſhould be conſulted with.

24. And that is the thing I ſhould earneſtly beg of them, that they would be ſo juſt to their own intereſt, as not to combine with ſeducers againſt themſelves; but if they have been ſo unhappy as to lend one ear to them, yet at leaſt not to give up both to be forc'd in a ſlaviſh ſubmiſſion to their dictates, but hear what may be ſaid on the other ſide. And ſure 'tis but a low compoſition for God thus to divide with *Satan*, yet 'tis that of which his Emiſſaries are ſo jealous, that 'tis one of their grand Maxims, that none who profeſſes Divinity is to be adviſ'd with; and therefore by all Arts they are to be render'd either ridiculous, or ſuſpected; to which methinks may be applied that Fable (which *Demoſthenes* once recited to the *Athenians*, when *Alexander* demanded of them to deliver up their Orators) of the Wolves and the Sheep, who coming to a Treaty, the firſt Article of the Wolves was, that the Sheep ſhould give up their Maſtives which guarded them: the reſemblance is too obvious to need a minute application.

A propoſal which is judg'd moſt unreaſonable in all other inſtances.

25. But this is manifeſtly to reverſe all former Rules, and to truſt a man rather in any Faculty than his own, and would never have prevail'd in any thing but where the ſoul is concern'd, that poor deſpicable thing

whereon alone we think fit to make experiments. 'Tis ſure, that if any ſhould diſpute their title to an earthly Poſſeſſion, they would not ſo tamely reſign it, nor would truſt their own ſelves in it's defence, but would conſult their ableſt Lawyers, and, by them, ſift out every circumſtance that might eſtabliſh their claim. Why ſhould they then ſuffer themſelves to be talk'd out of an Heavenly Inheritance, without ſo much as once propoſing their doubts to thoſe whoſe ſtudy and profeſſion it is to reſolve them? But as in all other ills, ſo in this, prevention is better than cure; and therefore to thoſe that are yet untainted, the ſecureſt courſe will be to ſtop both ears againſt all profane inſinuations, and to uſe thoſe who tempt them to be diſloyal to their God, that ſpiritual adultery, as they ſhould do thoſe who ſolicite them to the carnal, not ſo much as to enter parly, but with the greateſt indignation deteſt and reject them. 'Tis the ſaying of the Wiſe man, *Prov.* 25. 23. that *an angry countenance driveth away a back-biting tongue.* And certainly, would great Perſons look ſeverely on ſuch defamers of Religion, they would give ſome check to that impudence of profaneneſs which has given it ſuch a vogue in the World.

We ſhould think it diſingenuous to ſit unconcern'd when a friend or benefactor is reviled, and muſt have little value for God and religion if we can bear them traduc'd.

26. And ſure this is much their Duty to do, if they own any relation to that God who is ſo diſhonour'd. They would think it a very diſingenuous thing to ſit by to hear a Friend or Benefactour reviled, and expreſs no diſpleaſure; and is God ſo friendleſs among them, that only his traducers and blaſphemers can be patiently heard? Among the Jews, at the hearing of any Blaſphemy, they rent their clothes; but I fear we have ſome of our nice Dames that would be much more concern'd at a rip in their Garment, than at the rending and violating God's Sacred Name; and could more patiently behold the total ſubverſion of Religion, than the diſorder or miſplacing of a lock or ribband. But 'tis to be hoped there are not many ſo impious, and thoſe that are not, will ſurely think themſelves oblig'd with all their power, to diſcountenance all the Fautors of irreligion, whether they be the ſolemn ſedater ſort that would argue, or the jollier that would railly them out of their Faith.

The ſecond notion of Piety relates to practick duty.

27. But when they have thus provided againſt the aſſaults of others, and ſecur'd the ſpeculative part of Religion, they have only eſtabliſh'd a Judicatory againſt themſelves, ſtor'd up matter of Conviction and Accuſation, if they anſwer it not in the practick. I muſt therefore after this long excurſion, return to my firſt Point, and beſeech them ſeriouſly to weigh the obligations they have to Piety in the general notion of it, as it comprehends all the duties of a Chriſtian Life; of which as I intend not to ſpeak particularly, ſo I know not where to find a better ſummary, than that which St. *James* has drawn up, chap. 1. verſe 27. *Pure Religion and undefiled before God, even the Father, is this, to viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.*

The acts of worſhip or devotion, which the female Sex has great propriety in.

28. But beſides this general, there is (as I ſaid before) another more reſtrain'd notion of Piety, as it relates to our more immediate intercourſe with God in divine Ordinances and Worſhip, in which reſpect it commonly paſſes under the name of Devotion, and thus conſider'd it has a great propriety to the female Sex. For Devotion is a tender Plant, that will ſcarce root in ſtiff or rocky ground, but requires a ſupple gentle ſoil, and therefore the feminine ſoftneſs and pliableneſs is very apt and proper for it. And accordingly there have been very eminent growths of it in that Sex. I need not heap up examples of former Ages, but rather perſwade this to leave ſome at leaſt to the following; and the more conſi-

derable the perſons are, the more conſpicuous will be the Example, which ſeems the more to adapt it to thoſe I now ſpeak to. Devotion in a Cloiſter is as recluſe as the Votary, a light rather under a buſhel than on a candleſtick: and in an obſcure Cottage 'tis either not obſerv'd, or elſe thought to be but the effect of deſtitution and ſecular wants, a reſerve rather than a choice: but when thoſe who are in the eye of the world, the moſt eminent Actors on the Theater of human life, ſhall chuſe the part of a Saint, when thoſe who want none of the divertiſements or blandiſhments of earth, ſhall have their converſation in Heaven, this recommends it to the Spectators, as the true and greateſt object of human choice; ſince 'tis choſen by thoſe who know the utmoſt pretence of all its competitors.

Women of quality have few ſecular avocations.

29. Nor is devotion only more excellent in them in regard of its effects, but 'tis alſo more neceſſary in reſpect of their obligation. Devotion is an abſtraction from the world, and therefore cannot in any eminent degrees, be practiſed by thoſe whoſe neceſſities or buſineſs do much entangle them in it. So that from ſuch, a far leſs proportion will be accepted, than from thoſe, whoſe plenty and eaſe give them no other want but that of emploiment. And certainly if there be any of whom that can truly be ſaid; women of quality are the perſons: for they in this reſpect exceed even men of the like rank: for the men are often engag'd in publick emploiments, and muſt lend moſt of their time to the uſe of others; or however all have the care of their own private affairs, the managery of their fortunes to employ them. But of women the utmoſt that is ordinarily requir'd, is but a little eaſie inſpection within their own walls, the overſight of a few children and ſervants, and even from this how many are by their condition of life exempted; and how many more do by their niceneſs and delicacy exempt themſelves? And ſurely ſo perfect a vacancy is neither happy nor ſafe. And therefore God who projects we ſhould be both, never deſign'd it for any of mankind: but where he gives ſo much liberty from ſecular, he expects a greater diligence in ſpiritual emploiments.

'Tis an amazing proſpect to ſee ſouls born for immortality purſuing the uſes of the body.

30. And indeed 'tis an amazing thing to ſee, that any into whom he has breath'd the breath of life, on whom he has ſtamp'd the image of his own eternity, can think thoſe immortal ſouls were given them only to ſerve the mean and abject uſes of their corruptible bodies, (for which the ſoul of the dulleſt Animal would have done as well;) that eating and drinking, ſleep and recreations, which are only uſeful to the ſupporting us in this world, are the only things for which we were ſent hither. And yet if we may meaſure their opinions by their practice, this ſeems to be the perſwaſion of many of our female Gentry, who look upon it as a degrading, a kind of attainder of their blood, to do any thing but pleaſe their ſenſes. An error ſure of the moſt pernicious conſequence imaginable. We know a Lady of pleaſure is in one ſenſe a very ſcandalous Epithet, and truly 'tis no very laudable one in the other, nay which is worſe, they are often coincident, and fall in with each other. She whoſe ſole univerſal aim is pleaſure, will not think her ſelf much out of her road, in the purſuit of any particular. And ſhe that thinks ſhe lives for no other purpoſe, will ſo often be at a loſs for innocent pleaſure, that ſhe is almoſt under a neceſſity to call in the nocent, to ſerve the very end (as ſhe ſuppoſes) of her being. But indeed were they ſure to confine themſelves to ſuch as are harmleſs in their kind, yet the exceſs of them renders them ſinful, and the doting purſuit denomi-

nates them *lovers of Pleaſures more than lovers of God*, a character ſo black, that the Apoſtle compleats his Catalogue of the worſt vices of the worſt times with it, 1 *Tim.* 3. 4.

Spiritual pleaſures would be more entertaining as well as more noble.

31. It is therefore the great goodneſs of God to deſign a reſcue for thoſe whoſe condition expoſes them to that danger, and by exacting a liberal expence of time in their devotion, divert them from laviſhing both it and their ſouls together. Neither do's he by this defeat their aim of a pleaſant life, but rather aſſiſt it: for whereas ſenſual delights are vagrant, and muſt be chaſed through a hundred turnings and wild mazes, the ſpiritual are fixt, and one may alwaies know where to find them. How often are the voluptuous in pain to know which pleaſure to chooſe? like a ſurfeited ſtomack the greater variety is ſet before it, the more it nauſeats all. What difficulties hath a Lady many times to reſolve whether an afternoon ſhall be ſpent at the Court, or at the Theater; whether in dancing or at cards, in giving or receiving viſits, as not knowing which will beſt pleaſe her? But ſhe that knows the delights of Devotion, knows withal that there is no other fit to come in competition with it, and ſo is not diſtracted in her choice, nor need go farther than her Cloſet for the moſt agreeable entertainment. I know this will ſound a little incredible to thoſe that know no other uſe of Cloſets than as a conſervatory of gauds and baubles; that aſpire to no pleaſure there above that of children, the playing with the Pictures and Puppets that adorn it. Nor indeed do I pretend that ſuch ſhall find thoſe ſatisfactions I ſpeak of. Thoſe whoſe errand is to *Beelzebub* the God of flies, muſt not expect to be treated by the God of *Iſrael.* An ingenuous man will ſcorn to obtrude himſelf on thoſe who deſire not his company, and ſure God will not make himſelf more cheap. Thoſe that will meet him in their Cloſets, muſt come with that deſign, reſort thither as to an Oratory; nay more than ſo, they muſt come frequently. Spiritual joyes know not the way to a place where they are not often invited: and as men ſeek for each other not in places where they ſeldom or never come, but where they daily frequent; ſo God contrives, not to meet us in that place where we appear rarely and accidentally, but where we uſually reſort.

Of publick devotion, to which that of the cloſet muſt prepare.

32. I ſhall not need to branch out devotion into the ſeveral parts, that being done already in a multitude of other Treatiſes, of which if they pleaſe to conſult any one, they cannot want a Directory for their worſhip, whether private or publick. Only let me obſerve the order and connexion of thoſe two, that they are neither to be ſever'd nor yet to be rang'd prepoſterouſly. The private muſt not juſtle out the publick, for God expects his ſolemn homage; and their hudling it up in private, as it may give men ground to ſuſpect they pay none at all; ſo neither God nor man can collect any thing better from it, than that they are aſham'd of the Deity they pretend to ſerve. On the other ſide the publick muſt as little ſwallow up the private, and where it do's, there may be a juſt doubt of its ſincerity. Many attractives there may be to Church beſides that of Piety, and indeed where that is really the motive, it teaches ſo much reverence to that awful preſence they are to approach, as not to come without ſome preparation. What ſolicitude, what critical niceneſs will a Lady have for her dreſs when ſhe is to appear at a ſolemn meeting at Court, and ſhall ſhe take no care how ſordidly, how undecently ſhe appears when the King of Kings gives audience? Shall many hours, daies, nay perhaps weeks, be taken up in contriving for the one, and ſhall there never be a minute allotted for the other? This were ſure very unequal,

qual, and yet this is the caſe where the devotion of the Cloſet do's not prepare for that of the Church. If the mind be not firſt tun'd there, it will be very ill qualified for that harmony of ſouls, which is the only thing God regards in our publick offices. So that were there no other uſe of private devotion, but as it relates to the publick, that were enough to ſpeak the neceſſity of it.

As alſo for civil commerce.

33. But indeed 'tis not only a needful preparative to that ſacred commerce, but to our civil. The World is but a larger ſort of Peſthouſe, in every corner of it we meet with infectious airs, and thoſe that converſe in it had need of this Antidote. How many temptations do's every place, every hour, every interview, preſent to the ſhocking even of that moral integrity which a ſober Heathen would judge fit to preſerve; much more of that ſtrict Piety our Chriſtianity exacts?

Origen's *miſcarriage was preceded by the neglect of prayer.*

34. 'Twas the obſervation that *Origen* made of himſelf, that the day in which he ſo ſhamefully fell by ſacrificing to Idols, he had ventur'd out in the morning before he had compleated his uſual prayers, the Devil finding him ſo unarm'd took advantage to aſſault him, as knowing he had then but a ſingle impotent man to wreſtle with, who had forfeited, by not invoking,the protection of God. And indeed ſince prayer is the moſt powerful exorciſm to eject him, we may well conclude, the omiſſion of it is a likely means to invite him: for if God hath not the prepoſſeſſion, if we do not by hearty prayer ſurrender our ſouls to him in the morning, they are then all the day after like that empty houſe mention'd in the Goſpel, a fit receptacle for as many evil ſpirits as pleaſe to inhabit there. Nor are theſe ſpiritual the only dangers that attend us, we are liable to a multitude of ſecular ones alſo: our perſons, our fortunes, our reputations, every thing wherein we can receive a benefit, renders us equally capable of a prejudice. What multitudes of accidents are there to which we lie open, and nothing to guard us from them but the divine Providence? which if we neglect to ſolicit, we are ſure very unworthy of its defence. And this is a conſideration that methinks ſhould bring even the moſt ſenſual perſons upon their knees: for tho' too many may be found that deſpiſe the former danger, and can contentedly enough expoſe their ſouls, yet ſuch are uſually the moſt tender of their temporal concerns, it being commonly the exceſſive love of thoſe which makes them neglect the other. She that fears not the fall into ſin, will yet fear the tumbling into a precipice, and tho' ſhe care not for the ſpotting of her innocence, would be very loth any accident ſhould blemiſh her face, diſparage her fame, or impoveriſh her fortune, and yet from any or all of theſe ſhe is utterly unable to guard her ſelf. So that if Piety will not,yet intereſt methinks ſhould render her an homager to that omnipotent power, from whence alone ſhe can derive her ſafety.

Prayer as much our intereſt, as duty.

35. And now methinks a Duty that is thus bound on with the cords of a man, with human as well as divine perſuaſives, ſhould not eaſily be ſhaken off. I wiſh I could ſay it never is, but I fear there are ſome of thoſe I now ſpeak to, who neglect it in ſpight of all theſe inducements; who tho' they can pretend nothing ſerious enough to own the name of buſineſs, do yet ſuffer a ſucceſſion of I know not what impertinences to divert them. And indeed were the expence of ſome Ladys days calculated, we ſhould find every hour ſo full of emptineſs, ſo overladen with vanities, that 'tis ſcarce imaginable where an office of devotion ſhould croud in.

Yet vanity and diverſion leave no room for it.

36. The morning is divided between ſleep and dreſſing, nor would the morning ſuffice, but that they are fain to make a new computation to meaſure it, not by the Sun, but by the time of dining, which is often as late as the ſtationary hours of the Primitive Faſts, tho' upon a far differing motive. The afternoons being by this means reduc'd, are too ſhort for thoſe many divertiſments that await them, and muſt therefore borrow as much of the night as they lent to the morning. And when the meer fatigue of pleaſures ſend a Lady to her reſt, 'tis not imaginable that ſhe will permit Devotion to induce a yet greater, and more diſagreeable laſſitude, ſo that the whole round of her time ſeems to be a kind of magick circle, wherein nothing that is holy muſt appear. And indeed 'tis none of the higheſt ſtratagems of *Satan* thus to foreſtal their time; and by a perpetual ſupply of diverſions, inſenſibly ſteal from them the opportunities of divine Offices; an artifice by which I preſume he prevails on ſome, who would ſtartle at his groſſer and more apparent temptations.

The omiſſion of Prayer is to live without God in the world.

37. Nor needs he more than the ſucceſs of this project; for if this habitual neglect of Piety ſhould not finally end in great and criminal commiſſions, (as 'tis naturally very apt to do) yet his intereſt is ſufficiently ſecur'd by ſuch a cuſtomary omiſſion, which amounts to no leſs than the living *without God in the world:* a ſtate ſo hopeleſs, that when the Apoſtle recollects to the Epheſians the wretchedneſs of their Gentile State, he do's it in thoſe very words, *Epheſ.* 2. 12. And ſure thoſe that live ſo under Chriſtianity, are not in a better, but worſe condition, by how much contempt of God is more unpardonable than ignorance.

Prayer will be beſt ſecur'd by being the firſt work of the day.

38. It therefore infinitly concerns thoſe who are in danger of ſo fatal a ſnare, to look about them, and endeavour to countermine *Satan*, and be as induſtrious to ſecure their duty, as he is to ſupplant it; and to this purpoſe, one of the uſefulleſt expedients I know, is to be aforehand with him; I mean, to make their Devotions the firſt buſineſs of the Day; by which I intend not only thoſe Ejaculations wherewith we all ſhould open our eyes, but their more ſet and ſolemn Prayers; a Practice ſo highly expedient to the perſons foremention'd, that it falls little ſhort of neceſſary; and that upon ſeveral reaſons.

If morning Prayer be not begun till the Lady's dreſſing be finiſht, 'twill be a mockery, and be really evening Prayer.

39. Firſt, in relation to one of the great ends of Morning Prayer, which is to ſupplicate the guidance and protection of God for the whole day. Now if this be not done till ſome Ladies Dreſſings be finiſh'd, 'twill be half a mockery, a moſt prepoſterous requeſt, as to the greateſt part of the day, which will be paſt before; and beſides the abſurdity, there is danger in it; for all the preceding time is as it were outlaw'd by it, put from under the Divine Protection. Alas! are God's ſafeguards to be only meridional, to ſhine out only with the noon-day Sun? Do they ſuppoſe *Satan* keeps their hours, and ſtirs not abroad 'till the afternoon, that there is no danger either of corporal or ſpiritual miſchiefs before that time of the day? Certainly, if *the noiſe of the harp and the viol* which *Iſaiah* mentions, ch. 5. 12. do not drown it, they may often hear a morning as well as evening Paſſing-bell. With how many others do's the glaſs of life run out whilſt they are at their looking-glaſſes? How many bodies are maim'd and wounded in the time they are trimming and decking theirs? And *who made them differ from others*? 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. Or what tenure have they in the ſafety of one moment, ſave what they owe to God's Providence? And what rational expectation can they have of that, when they do not invoke it?

40. Nor

They have reaſon to put on their armour, before their ornaments.

40. Nor are the ſpiritual dangers leſs, but rather much more; and they muſt be very ſlight obſervers of themſelves, if they do not diſcern that ſnares may be laid for them in their receſſes in their chambers, as well as in places of the moſt publick reſort. Indeed were there no other than what relates to their dreſs, and curioſity thereof, it were enough to evidence their danger; ſcarce any part of that but a temptation is in it: to Pride, if it hit right, and pleaſe their fancy: to Anger and Vexation, if it do not. They have need therefore to put on their armour before their ornaments, by a prepoſſeſſion of Prayer and Meditation to ſecure their vitals, leſt by an internal death of Grace, their bodies (in their utmoſt luſter) prove but the painted Sepulcher of their ſouls.

'Tis prepoſterous to preferr the intereſts of the ſoul, to thoſe of the meaneſt members of the body.

41. In the ſecond place, this appears requiſit in oppoſition to the indecency and incongruity of the contrary. How inverted an eſtimate do they make of things that poſtpone the intereſts of their ſouls to the meaneſt member of their bodies, pay a ſupererrogating attendance to the one, before the other comes at all into their care. But what is yet worſe, how vile a contumely is offer'd to the Majeſty of God, who is uſed as they do their dunning Creditors, poſted off with an excuſe of no leiſure yet to ſpeak with him; whilſt in the mean time all the factors for their vanity can have ready acceſs and full audience. God muſt attend till their Tailor, or their Shoomaker pleaſe to diſmiſs them, and at the beſt, can be allow'd only to bring up the rear of a whole ſhole of Artificers.

Moſt probably the whole dreſſing will not be finiſht 'till dinner calls.

42. But thirdly, 'tis very doubtful whether he ſhall obtain ſo much from them; for it may often happen that he ſhall be quite precluded: ſo numerous are the parts of a modiſh equipage, and ſo exact a ſymmetry is requir'd in the whole, that 'tis the buſineſs of many hours to compleat it; when as 'twas ſaid of the Roman Ladies, a council muſt be call'd about the placing of a hair that ſits irregularly, when one thing after another ſhall be tried, and again rejected, as not exact, or not becoming; time all the while inſenſibly ſteals away, and tho' that will not ſtay for them, yet dinner doth, and then their bellies begin to murmur to pay any longer attendance on their backs, and claim the next turn; and between theſe two competitors, 'tis odds Devotion will be quite excluded, or reduc'd only to a grace before meat: (and well if that, conſidering how unfaſhionable even that is grown.) In the mean time, what a wretched improvidence is it, to reduce the one neceſſary buſineſs of the day to ſuch uncertainties, nay almoſt to a certain diſappointment.

If the time of prayer be not ſupplanted, yet the zeal will.

43. Yet ſuppoſe this hazard were only imaginary, and a Lady were infallibly ſure not to loſe the time for her Prayers; yet in the fourth place, ſhe will be likely by ſuch preceding diverſions to loſe much of her zeal in them, ſo that if they be ſaid at all, they will ſcarce be ſaid in a due manner. There is alas! ſuch a repugnancy in our nature to any thing ſpiritual, that we cannot cloſe in an inſtant; but as a benummed frozen body will need ſome rubbing and chafing before it can be fit for motion; ſo our more frozen ſouls require ſome previous incitations before they can with any vigor exert themſelves in Devotion. Now ſure the dreſſing time (I mean ſuch a dreſſing as we now ſuppoſe) is not very proper for ſuch preparations. 'Tis, on the contrary, extreme apt to indiſpoſe and unfit them; for when the fancy is poſſeſt with ſo many little images of vanity, they will not eaſily be ejected. That ranging faculty is, God knows, too apt to bring in even the remoteſt diverſions; but when it has ſuch a ſtock ready at hand, how will it pour them in upon the mind, to the great allaying, if not utter extinguiſhing of Devotion.

There is ſomewhat of omen in beginnings.

44. When all theſe conſiderations are put together, 'twill ſure appear wholeſom counſel, that ſuch perſons ſhould not truſt ſo important a Duty to ſo many caſualties, but in the firſt place ſecure a time for that, repair to their Oratory before their dreſſing room, and by an early conſecration of themſelves to God, defeat *Satan*'s claim, and diſcourage his attempts for the reſt of the day. We know there is a natural efficacy in a good beginning, towards the producing a good ending: but in ſpiritual things the influence is yet greater, becauſe it draws in Auxiliaries from above, and engages the yet farther aſſiſtances of Grace. Upon which account I am apt to believe, that where this Duty is ſincerely and fervently performed in the morning, it will not totally be neglected in the ſucceeding parts of the day. 'Twill be eaſy to diſcern the ſame obligation, the ſame advantage of cloſing the day with God, that there was to begin it; and when thoſe two boundaries are ſecured, when thoſe are lookt upon as ſtrict duty, and conſtantly obſerved, 'tis not unlikely but their Piety may grow generous, and with *David, Pſ.* 55. 17. add to *the evening and morning a noon-day office*; for where Devotion is real, 'tis apt to be progreſſive; and the more we converſe with God, the more we ſhall deſire to do ſo. Thus we ſee how this little cloud like that of *Elijah*, 1 *Kings* 18. 44. may *over ſpread the Heavens*, and this handful of firſt-fruits may hallow the whole day.

There is more, a kind of right acquir'd by having the firſt poſſeſſion.

45. Nay indeed, when it has advanced thus far, 'twill probably go farther; 'twill not keep it ſelf only on the defenſive part, but invade its oppoſits, get dayly ground of thoſe vanities by which it was before oppreſt. For when a Lady has in her Cloſet waſht her cheeks with penitential tears, ſhe cannot ſure when ſhe comes out, think them prepared for the varniſh of the paint and fucus. When ſhe has attentively examined her Conſcience, that impartial mirrour, and there diſcern'd all the blemiſhes of her nobler part, ſhe will ſure with ſomewhat a more cold concern conſult her looking-glaſs. And when ſhe has by pious vows and reſolutions *put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Rom.* 13. 14. 'twill be impoſſible for her to be very anxiouſly careful about her garments. This devout temper of her mind will by a holy *leger-demain* ſhuffle the Romances out of her hand, and ſubſtitute the Oracles of Truth; will not let her dream away her time in phantaſtick ſcenes, and elaborate nothing, but prompt her *to give all diligence to make her Calling and Election ſure*. In a word, when ſhe once underſtands what it is to ſpend one hour devoutly, ſhe will endeavour to reſcue all the reſt from trifles and impertinent entertainments; and employ them to purpoſes more worthy the great end of her being. Thus may ſhe almoſt inſenſibly wind her ſelf out of the ſnare, diſentangle her ſelf from thoſe temptations wherewith ſhe was enwrapt; and by having her *heart ſo ſet at liberty, may run the wayes of God's Commandments, Pſ.* 119.

Private Devotion cannot commute for the omiſſion of publick.

46. But private Devotions, tho' of excellent effect, connot commute for the omiſſion of Publick; nor indeed can it long maintain its vigour, unleſs ſometimes cheriſhed by the warmth of Chriſtian Aſſemblies: and if God pleaſe to viſit them in their Cloſets, they are (even by their own Laws of Civility) obliged to return Viſits, and attend him in his houſe. I fear too many adapt the inſtance in the Formality too, and come as unconcernedly to him as they do to one another. 'Tis true, thoſe that pay him a cordial reverence at Home, will certainly do it at the Church; and therefore by the little we ſee performed by ſome there, we may doubt God ſees as little in their Retirements. But what ſpeak I of a

hearty Reverence, when 'tis viſible that there are thoſe who pay none at all? How rare a ſight is it for ſome Ladies to appear at Church? How many times (I had almoſt ſaid hundreds) do we ſee their Coaches ſtand at the Play-houſe, for once at God's? They ſeem to own no diſtinction of daies, unleſs it be, that Sunday is their moſt vacant ſeaſon to take Phyſick, or to lie a-bed; and if ſuch do ever come to Church, Devotion is like to be the leaſt of their errand. Some new garment perhaps or dreſs is to be ſhew'd, and that thought the place where the moſt critical Judges of thoſe things will be moſt at leiſure to obſerve them: or if they come not to teach new faſhions, it may be they come to learn; and ſuch documents will be ſurer to be put in practiſe than any in the Sermon. Poſſibly they expect to ſee ſome friend or acquaintance there, and as if Chriſt were to be ſerved (as he was born) in an Inn, make his houſe the common rendezvouz in which to meet their Aſſociates. If they have any more ingenuous attractives, 'tis commonly that of Curioſity, to hear ſome new celebrated Preacher, and that rather for his Rhetorick than his Divinity; and this motive (tho' the beſt of the ſet) is but like that which prevail'd with thoſe *Jews* St. *John* mentions, who came to *Jeſus that they might ſee Lazarus*, Joh. 12.

Hypocriſy is now an almoſt out-dated ingredient of the offices of devotion.

47. I ſhall not rank among theſe Motives, that of Hypocriſie and ſeeming Holineſs, for from that all the reſt do acquit them. Indeed 'tis the only ſin which this Age has ſeem'd to reform, and that too only by way of *Antiperiſtaſis*, not by the Virtue but the Iniquity of the Times. Religion is grown ſo unfaſhionable, ſo contemptible, that none can be now tempted to put on ſo ridiculous a diſguiſe. And altho' as to ſingle perſons I confeſs Hypocriſy one of the deepeſt Guilts, ſuch as has a peculiar portion aſſign'd it by Chriſt in the place of torment, *Mat.* 23. 15. yet as to Communities, I cannot but think it better to have a face of Religion than Profaneneſs. The example of the former may work beyond it ſelf,and a Form of Godlineſs in ſome may produce the Power of it in others; but a Pattern of Profaneneſs, the farther it operates, the worſe, and all the progreſs it can make, is from one wickedneſs to another, ſo that I fear as St. *Bernard* wiſht for his feaver again, ſo the Church may e're long for her Hypocrites.

Profaneneſs takes up the whole.

48. But to recal my ſelf from this digreſſion, let us a little enquire how thoſe, whom the foremention'd Motives bring to Church, behave themſelves there; and that is indeed with great conformity to the ends of their coming, their errand is not to be Suppliants, neither do they put themſelves in the poſture, kneeling is impertinent for them who mean not to pray, but as the Apoſtle deſcribes the Idolatrous ſervice of the *Iſraelites, They ſat down to eat and drink, and roſe up to play*; ſo theſe ſit down to talk and laugh with their Pew-fellows, and riſe up to gape and look about them. When they ſhould be confeſſing their ſins to Almighty God, they are apologizing (perhaps) to one another for the omiſſion of a ceremonious viſit, or ſome other breach of civility; when they ſhould be *obſerving the goings of God in the Sanctuary*, Pſal. 68. they are inquiring when this Lady came to Town, or when that goes out; nay perhaps the Theater is brought into the Temple, the laſt Play they ſaw is recollected, and Quotations enough brought thence to vie with the Preacher. 'Tis impoſſible to reckon up all their Topicks of diſcourſe, nay it were indeed ſcandalous for one that reproves them to pretend to know by how many impertinencies (to ſay no worſe) they profane that holy Place and Time.

49. But

Heatheniſm and Mahometaniſm will riſe up in judgment againſt us Chriſtians.

49. But that all-ſeeing eye in whoſe preſence they are, keeps an exact account, and will charge them not only with the principal but the product; not only with their own irreverences, but with thoſe which by their example or encouragement they have occaſion'd in others, nay farther even with that ſcandal which redounds to Chriſtianity by it. For when one that is to chooſe a Religion, ſha'l read the Precepts of *Pythagoras* enjoyning that the Gods muſt not be worſhip'd in paſſing by, as it were accidentally, but with the greateſt ſolemnity and intention, when they ſhall conſider the care of *Numa* in inſtituting Officers, who at Sacrifices and all divine Services ſhould call upon the people to keep ſilence and advert to Devotion, or but the practiſe of the preſent *Mahometans,* who permit none to ſit in their *Moſchos,* nor to pray without proſtration: When I ſay this is conſidered, and compar'd with the ſcandalous indecency obſervable in our Churches, he will certainly exclude Chriſtianity from all competition in his choice; not allow that the name of a Religion, whoſe very Worſhip appears ſo profane, and whoſe Votaries mock the God they pretend to ſerve.

The female Sex are leſs obnoxious than the other.

50. Yet how ſevere ſoever the charge may lie againſt ſome, I am far from including all under it. I know there are many Ladies whoſe examples are reproches to the other Sex, that help to fill our Congregations when Gentlemen deſert them, and to whom ſometimes we alone ow that our Churches are not furniſhed like the Feaſt in the Parable, *Luke* 14. 21. meerly out of *the high waies and hedges, with the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind;* yet ſome even of theſe may be liable to ſome irregularity, which may be the effects of inadvertency or miſperſwaſion, tho' not of contempt or profaneneſs.

The indevotion of late coming to prayers diſturbs others.

51. And firſt 'tis obſervable in ſome who come conſtantly, that yet they come not early, ſo that a conſiderable part of Prayers is paſt e're they enter the Church. This firſt cauſes ſome diſturbance to others, the ſucceſſive entry of new comers keeping the Congregation in a continual motion and agitation; which how unagreeable it is to Devotion, *Numa* a Heathen Prince may teach us, who *Plutarch* tells us took a particular care, that in the time of divine worſhip, no knocking, clapping, or other noiſe ſhould be heard; as well knowing how much the operations of the intellect are obſtructed by any thing that importunes the Senſes. What would he have ſaid, ſhould he come into one of our City Congregations, where often during the whole time of Prayer, the clapping of Pew-doors do's out-noiſe the Reader?

Looſes the fundamental part of devotion the confeſſing of ſin.

52. But beſides the indecency of the thing and the interruption it gives to others, 'tis very injurious to themſelves; a kind of partial excommunication of their own inflicting, which excludes them from part of the divine Offices, and from that part too which is of the moſt univerſal Concern, I mean the Confeſſion of ſins, which the wiſdom of our Church has fitly placed in the beginning of her Service, as the neceſſary introduction to all the reſt. For conſidering how obnoxious we are all to the wrath and vengeance of God, our firſt buſineſs is to deprecate that by an humble confeſſion of our guilt. Would any Malefactor that has forfeited his life to Juſtice, come boldly to his Prince, and without taking notice of his crimes, importune him to beſtow the greateſt favours and dignities upon him? Yet 'tis the very ſame abrupt impudence in us, to ſupplicate the Divine Majeſty before we attempt to atone him, to ask good things from him before we have acknowledg-

ed the ill we have done againſt him. And to ſuch God may juſtly make ſuch a return as *Auguſtus* did to one that had entertained him much below his Greatneſs, *I knew not before that we were ſuch familiars.*

Talking before ſervice begins, renders unfit for the duty.

53. It will much better become them to anticipate the time, *to wait at the poſts of his doors, Prov.* 8. 31. and contrive to be there before the Service begins, that ſo by previous recollection they may put their minds in a fit poſture of addreſs at the publick Audience: which (by the way) ſpeaks it to be no very laudable cuſtom which almoſt univerſally prevails, that thoſe few who do come early, ſpend the interval before Service in talking with one another, by which they do not only loſe the advantage of that time for preparation, but convert it into the direct contrary, do thereby actually unfit and indiſpoſe themſelves. God knows our hearts, even in their moſt compoſed temper, are too apt to create diverſions; we need not ſtart game for them to chaſe, and by prefacing our Prayer with ſecular diſcourſe, make a game for the ſame thoughts to return upon us in them. Beſides, in relation to the place, it has a ſpice of Profaneneſs, 'tis the bringing the Moabite and Ammonite into the Temple, *Deut.* 23. 3. a kind of invaſion on God's Propriety, by introducing our worldly concerns or divertiſements into the houſe which is called by his name, ſolemnly dedicated to him, and therefore dedicated that it might be his peculiar. So that with a little variation, we may to ſuch apply the expoſtulatory reproof of the Apoſtle to the Corinthians, 1 *Cor.* 11. 22. *what, have ye not houſes to talk and converſe in, or deſpiſe ye the Church of God?* But this is, I confeſs, a reproof that will not reach to many, there being ſo few of the better ſort that come early enough to talk before Service, and as for thoſe who talk at it, we have already rankt them under another *Claſſis.* Yet give me leave to add, that thoſe fall not much ſhort of that degree of profaneneſs, who come late only becauſe they are loath to riſe, or to abate any thing of the curioſity of their dreſs. For ſhe that prefers her ſloath or her vanity before God's Service, is like (how decently ſoever ſhe behave her ſelf) to give but an inſignificant attendance at it.

The unequal value of ſermons has ſupplanted prayer.

54. But I gueſs this may in many proceed from another cauſe, which tho' leſs ill in their intentions, is not ſo in reſpect either of its unreaſonableneſs, or its effects, and that is an unequal eſtimate they make of the parts of God's Service. This laſt Age has brought in ſuch a partiality for Preaching, that Prayer ſeems comparatively (like *Sarah* to *Hagar*) deſpicable in their eyes: ſo that if they can but come time enough to the Sermon, they think they have diſcharged the weightier part of the Law, and of their own duty. This miſperſwaſion, tho' it have too generally diffuſed it ſelf thro' both Sexes, yet ſeems to have been very eſpecially imbibed by the Female. And beſides the evidence that Sunday gives, the week-days afford no leſs. Let there be a Lecture tho' at the remoteſt part of the Town, what hurrying is there to it, but let the Bell tole never ſo loud for the Canonical hours of Common Prayer, 'twill not call the neareſt of the Neighbourhood. I ſpeak not of thoſe who are at defiance with our Service, and have liſted themſelves in ſeparate Congregations (for I intend not to trace them thro' their wild mazes) but of thoſe who yet own our Church, and object not to its Offices, but only have ſuffered their value for them to be inſenſibly undermined by their greater zeal for Preaching. God ſure intends an Harmony in all ſacred Ordinances, and would not have a Party ſet up againſt each other, but mutually aſſiſt each others operation upon us. Thus Prayer diſpoſes us to receive benefit by Preach-

ing, and Preaching teaches us how to Pray aright; and God grant we may long enjoy the publick opportunities of both. Yet ſince this *Age* has brought them to a competition, I muſt take leave to ſay, that if we come impartially to weigh Prayer and Preaching, the Ballance will incline another way than it ſeems with many to do, and we ſhall find Prayer the more eſſential part of Religion.

The difference of the uſe of preaching to heathens and Chriſtians.

55. The end of Preaching is twofold, either to teach us what we know not, or excite us to practice what we already know: now in relation to the firſt of theſe ends, I ſuppoſe there is a wide difference between Preaching at the firſt promulgation of the Goſpel, and now. 'Twas then the only way of revealing to the World the whole myſtery of our Salvation, ſo that the Apoſtle's inference was then irrefragable, *How ſhall they believe on him of whom they have not heard, and how ſhall they hear without a Preacher*? *Rom.* 10. 14. But where Chriſtianity is planted, and the New Teſtament received, we have therein the whole Doctrine of Chriſt; nay we have not only the matter, but the very form of many of thoſe Sermons which Chriſt and his Apoſtles preach'd; ſo that unleſs we think them not ſufficiently gifted, we cannot but acknowledge we have in them ample inſtruction, both for Faith and Manners; enough, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, to *make us wiſe unto ſalvation*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. And the reading of thoſe being a conſiderable part of our Churche's Service, we have the moſt genuine Preaching even before the Miniſter aſcends the Pulpit. Beſides for the help of thoſe whoſe youth or incapacity diſables them from making collections thence for themſelves, our Church has epitomis'd the moſt neceſſary Points of Belief and Practice in the Catechiſm, not (as the Roman) to preclude their farther ſearch, but to ſupply them in the interim till they are qualified for it; and by that early infuſion of Chriſtian Principles, to ſecure them of that knowledge which is ſimply neceſſary to their Salvation.

Our concern lies chiefly in that end of preaching which is the exciting to practice.

56. Now ſure, to people in this ſtate, Preaching is not of ſo abſolute neceſſity in reſpect of Inſtruction, as it was for thoſe who from Heatheniſm and Idolatry were to be brought firſt to the Knowledge, and then to the Faith of Chriſt. We ſeem therefore now more generally concern'd in the other end of Preaching, the exciting us to Practice; for alas! there are few of us who ſtumble on ſin for want of light, but either thro' heedleſneſs, and want of looking before us, or elſe by a wilful proſtration of our ſelves to it; ſo that we often need to be rouſed out of our negligence, to be frighted out of our ſtubbornneſs, and by a cloſe application of thoſe Truths we either forget or ſuppreſs, be animated to our duty. And for this purpoſe Preaching is doubtleſs of excellent uſe, and the nauſeating of it ſhews a very ſick conſtitution of mind; yet ſure the over-greedy deſire may be a Diſeaſe alſo. He that eats more than he can concoct, do's not ſo much aſſiſt as oppreſs nature, and thoſe that run from Sermon to Sermon, that allow themſelves no time to chew, much leſs to digeſt what they hear, will ſooner confound their Brains than better their lives. Nay, it oft betrays them to a very pernicious deluſion, it diverts them from many of the practical parts of Piety, and yet gives them a confidence that they are extraordinarily Pious; and by their belief that Religion conſiſts principally in hearing, makes them forget to try themſelves by that more infallible teſt of doing God's will. So that whereas God never deſign'd Preaching for more than a guide in their way, they make it their way, and their end too; and Hearing muſt, like a circle, begin and terminate in it ſelf.

'Twould be the part of an unprofitable ſervant to pleaſe himſelf only in hearing his Lord's commands.

57. I am ſure in ſecular concerns, we ſhould think him a very unprofitable ſervant, that after his Lord had given him directions what to do, ſhould be ſo tranſported with hearing his inſtructions, that he ſhould deſire to have it infinitly repeated, and ſo ſpend the time wherein he ſhould do the work. And we have reaſon to think God will make the ſame judgment of thoſe who do the like in his Service.

'Tis ſtrange the ravenous appetite of hearing ſhould conſiſt with niceneſs.

58. One would now think that this ravenous appetite of hearing ſhould ſuperſede all niceneſs in it, yet we find it do's not, but that ſome make a ſhift to be at once voracious and ſqueamiſh. If this ſpiritual food be not artificially dreſt, 'tis too groſs for their palates; the Phraſe muſt be elegant, the words well accented, and the *inticing words of man's wiſdom* which St. *Paul* diſclaims in his preaching, 1 *Cor.* 2. 4. is that which they principally regard. Nay the memory of the Preacher becomes the moſt material Point of his Sermon, and the firſt glance on his Book prejudges him. I need not add the extravagancies of an uncouth tone, a furious vehemence, or phantaſtick geſture, wherein the ſoul and vital efficacy of Preaching has been ſolemnly placed. Now 'tis evident all theſe are but trivial Accompliſhments; ſo that thoſe who inſiſt ſo much on them, do make Preaching much leſs Sacred and Divine than indeed it is; and therefore cannot without abſurdity lay the main ſtreſs of Religion upon it, or make that the higheſt of God's Ordinances, which ow's all its gratefulneſs with them to the Endowments of men. Some may think I purſue this ſubject too far, but I am ſure I do it not with deſign to derogate from the juſt reſpect due to Preaching; only I would not have it monopolize our eſteem, or juſtle out another Duty, which is of more conſtant uſe, and indiſpenſible neceſſity.

Prayer is the breathing of the ſoul.

59. And ſuch certainly is prayer, that reſpiration of the ſoul, which is ſo neceſſary that it admits not of long intermiſſion, and therefore ſeems to carry the ſame proportion to hearing, which breathing do's to eating: we may make long intervals of feeding, and yet ſubſiſt; but if we ſhould do ſo in breathing, we cannot recover it. Prayer is like the morning and evening Sacrifice under the Law, which God ordain'd ſhould be perpetual; whereas Preaching is but like the readings in the Synagogues on Sabbaths and Feſtivals. Indeed, however we have confounded the terms, 'tis Prayer only that can properly be call'd the Worſhip of God; 'tis that by which we pay him his ſolemn homage, acknowledge his ſoveraignty, and our own dependance. When we hear, we do no more than what every Diſciple do's to his Maſter; but when we pray, we own him as the ſpring and ſource of all the good we exſpect, as the Author of our Being, and the Object of our Adoration: in a word, we do by it profeſs him our God; it being an impreſs of meer natural Religion to ſupplicate the Deity we acknowledge.

Equally neceſſary as it.

60. And as by prayer we render the greateſt Honour to God, ſo likewiſe do we procure the greateſt advantages to our ſelves. Prayer is the powerful Engin, by which we draw down Bleſſings; 'tis the key which lets us into the immenſe Store-houſe of the Almighty; nay 'tis that upon which the Efficacy of Preaching depends. The Word is but a dead letter without the Spirit; and God has promiſed the Spirit to none but thoſe that ask it, *Luke* 11. 13. So that Prayer is that which enlivens and inſpirits our moſt ſacred actions: and accordingly in Scripture we find it ſtill a concomitant in all Eccleſiaſtical Concerns. When an Apoſtle was to be ſubſtituted in the room of *Judas*, we find they referr'd it not to the deciſion of lots, till God, who had the ſole diſpoſing of them, *Prov.* 16. 33.

had been invoked by ſolemn Prayer, *Acts* 1. 24. So when ***Barnabas*** and ***Saul*** were to be ſeparated to the Miniſtry, tho' the appointment were by the Holy Ghoſt, yet that ſuperſeded not the neceſſity of Prayer; the Apoſtles pray'd, (yea, and faſted too) before they laid their hand on them, *Acts* 13. 3. Nay, our Bleſſed Saviour Himſelf, tho' He knew ***what was in man***, and needed no guidance but his own Omniſcience in his choice: yet we find that before his Election of the twelve Apoſtles, he continued a whole night in Prayer to God, *Luke* 6. 12. doubtleſs to teach us how requiſit Prayer is in all our important intereſts, which like the Pillar of Cloud and Fire to the Iſraelites, is our beſt convoy thro' the Wilderneſs, thro' all the ſnares and temptations, thro' all the calamities and diſtreſſes of this World, and our moſt infallible Guide to the Land of Promiſe.

Prayer is ſtrengthned by union.

61. And ſure when all theſe are the properties of Prayer, tho' private, they will not leſs belong to the publick; ſuch a conſpiration and union of importunate Devotion muſt have a proportionable increaſe in its effect; and if Heaven can ſuffer violence by the fervor of one ſingle Votary, with what ſtorms, what batteries will it be forc'd by a numerous Congregation? We find the Church is, by Chriſt, compared to ***an Army with banners***, *Cant.* 6. 3. but ſure never is this Army in ſo good array, in ſo invincible a poſture as upon its knees. The Eccleſiaſtical ſtory tells us of a Legion of Chriſtians in *Aurelius*'s Camp, who in that poſture diſcomfited two aſſailants at once, the enemy and the drought. That breath which they ſent up in Prayers, like a kindly exhalation return'd in rain, and reliev'd the periſhing Army: and had we but the ſame fervor, and the ſame innocency, could we lift up but as pure hands as they did, there would be no Bleſſing beyond our reach. But the leſs any of us find our ſelves ſo qualified, the more need we have to put our ſelves among thoſe that are.

It has a holy contagion and by its flame is apt to enkindle others.

62. There is an happy contagion in goodneſs; like green wood we may perhaps be kindled by the neighbouring flame: the example of another's zeal may awake mine. However, there is ſome advantage in being in the company: thoſe ſhower of benediction which their Prayers bring down, are ſo plentiful, that ſome drops at leaſt may ſcatter upon thoſe about them. We find *Eliſha* for *Jehoſhaphat*'s ſake, endur'd the preſence of *Jehoram*, whom otherwiſe he profeſſed he would not have lookt towards, 2 *Kings* 3. 14. and God perhaps may do the like in this caſe; and as he proſper'd *Potiphar* for *Joſeph*'s ſake, *Gen.* 39. 23. ſo the Piety of ſome few may redound to the benefit of all. From all theſe conſiderations I ſuppoſe may ſufficiently be evinc'd the neceſſity and benefit of publick Prayer, and conſequently the unreaſonableneſs of thoſe who upon any pretence neglect it. I ſhall now only beſeech thoſe to whom I ſpeak to make the application to themſelves, and to ſhew they do ſo by their more early and more aſſiduous attendance on it.

Communicating the higheſt act of devotion, unhappily neglected.

63. There is alſo another Duty to which many of theſe to whom I write ſeem to need ſome incitation, and that is Communicating, a part of Devotion which the looſer ſort ſcarce ever think in ſeaſon till their death beds; as if that Sacrament like the Romaniſts Extream Unction, were only fit for expiring ſouls: but to ſuch we may apply the words of the Angel to the woman, *Luke* 24. 5. ***Why ſeek ye the living among the dead?*** Why think ye that the Sun of Righteouſneſs is only to ſhine in the ſhades of death; or that Chriſt is never to give us his fleſh till we are putting off our own? 'Tis one principal end of that Sacrament to engage and enable us to a new life; how prepoſterous then is it, how utterly inconſiſtent

with that end to defer it to the hour of death. 'Tis true 'tis a good *Viaticum* for ſuch as are in their way towards bliſs, but it is too bold a hope to fancy that it ſhall in an inſtant bring them into that way, who have their whole life poſted on in the contrary. The roads to Heaven and Hell lie ſure too far aſunder to be within diſtance of one ſtep; nor can it with any ſafety be preſum'd that once receiving at their death, ſhall expiate ſo many wilful neglects of it in their life.

Or if not totally omitted, infrequently attended.

64. But I ſhall ſuppoſe theſe total Omiſſions are not a common guilt: yet with many others the fault differs only in degree, they do not wholly omit, but yet come ſo infrequently as if they thought it a very arbitrary matter whether they come or no. And this truly is obſervable in many who ſeem to give good attendance on other parts of divine Worſhip: for indeed 'tis a ſad ſpectacle to ſee, that let a Church be never ſo much crouded at Sermon, 'tis emptied in an inſtant when the Communion begins: people run as it were frighted from it, as if they thought with thoſe in *Malachy*, that *the table of our Lord is polluted*, Mal. 1. 12. that ſome peſt or infection would thence break forth upon them. A ſtrange indignity to the Majeſty, and ingratitude to the love of our Redeemer. Let a King, or but ſome great man make a publick entertainment, how hard is it to keep back the preſſing multitude: many Officers are neceſſary to repel the uninvited gueſts: and yet here there needs more to drive us to it, tho' the invitation be more general, and the Treat infinitely more magnificent.

Vainly excus'd by the pretence of reverence:

65. I know this fault (like many other) ſhrouds it ſelf under a fair diſguiſe, and this barbarous neglect pretends to the humbleſt veneration. People ſay 'tis their great reverence they have for the Sacrament that keeps them at ſo great a diſtance; but ſure that is but a fictitious reverence which diſcards Obedience; and when Chriſt commands our coming, our drawing back looks more like ſtubbornneſs and Rebellion, than aw and reſpect. I ſuppoſe we pretend not to exceed the Primitive Chriſtians in humility and Godly fear; and yet they communicated daily, and therefore ſure our reverence is of a much differing make from theirs, if it produce ſuch contrary effects. Indeed 'tis to be fear'd that many put a great cheat upon themſelves in this matter. The Euchariſt is juſtly accounted the higheſt of divine Ordinances, and thoſe who think of no preparation in other, yet have ſome general impreſſions of the neceſſity of it in this; but the uneaſineſs of the task diſcourages them, they dare not come without a wedding garment, and yet are loth to be at the pains to put it on: ſo that all this goodly pretext of reverence, is but the Devil in *Samuel*'s Mantle, is but ſloth clad in the habit of humility.

Or that at worſt 'tis only an omiſſion.

66. And to this temptation of ſloth, there is another thing very ſubſervient, and that is the eaſy and ſlight opinion which is commonly taken of ſins of Omiſſion. Many are ſtartled at great Commiſſions, think them to carry a face of deformity and horrour, who in the mean time look on Omiſſions only as privations and meer nothings, as if all the affirmative Precepts were only things of form, put in by God rather to try our inclinations, than to oblige our performance; and ſo were rather overtures and propoſals which we may aſſent to or not, than injunctions which at our peril we muſt obey. A fancy no leſs abſurd than impious; that God ſhould be content ſo to compound with his creatures (and like a Prince overpowr'd by his vaſſals) conſent to remit all their homage, abſolve them from all poſitive Duty, ſo they would be but ſo civil as not to flie in his face, or to commit outrage on his Perſon. But this wild ima-

gination needs no other confutation, than that form of Inditement our Saviour gives us as the Model of that which ſhall be uſed at the laſt day, *Mat.* 25. where the whole proceſs lies againſt ſins of Omiſſion, and yet the ſentence is as diſmal and irreverſible, as if all the Commiſſions in the World had been put into the bill.

This omiſſion has the complicated guilt of being an omiſſion and an unkindneſs.

67. And certainly of all Omiſſions none is like to be more ſeverely charged than this of communicating, which is not only a diſobedience, but an unkindneſs, which ſtrikes not only at the Authority, but the Love of our Lord, when he ſo affects a union with us, that he creates Myſteries only to effect it, when he deſcends even to our ſenſuality, and becauſe we want ſpiritual appetites, puts himſelf within reach of our natural, and as he once veil'd his Divinity in fleſh, ſo now veils even that fleſh under the form of our corporal nouriſhment, only that he may the more indiſſolvebly unite, yea incorporate himſelf with us: When I ſay he do's all this, we are not only impious, but inhumane if it will not attract us. Nay farther, when he do's all this upon the moſt endearing memory of what he has before done for us, when he preſents himſelf to our embraces in the ſame form wherein he preſented himſelf to God for our expiation, when he ſhews us thoſe wounds which our iniquities made, thoſe ſtripes by which we were healed, that death by which we are revived, ſhall we to compleat the Scene of his Paſſion, force him alſo to that pathetick complaint, *Lam.* 1. 12. *Have ye no regard all ye that paſs by*? Shall we inſtead of ſmiting our breaſts (as did other witneſſes of his ſufferings) turn our backs? If we can habitually do this, 'tis to be feared the next degree will be to wag our heads too, and we ſhall have the profaneneſs to deride what we have not the Piety to commemorate.

Coldneſs will naturally improve to lothing.

68. And this ſeems to be no improbable fear: for in Religion there are gradual declinations as well as advances: coldneſs and tepidity will (if not ſtopt in its progreſs) quickly grow to loathing and contempt. And indeed to what can we more reaſonably impute the great overflowings of profaneneſs among us, than to our ill-husbanding the means of Grace? Now certainly of all thoſe means there is none of greater energy and power than the bleſſed Sacrament.

Were there no other benefit than what the preparation implies, 'twere very conſiderable.

69. Were there no other benefit derived from it, ſave that which the preparation implies, 'twere very conſiderable. It brings us to a recollection, fixes our indefinite purpoſes of ſearching and trying our ways, which elſe perhaps we ſhould infinitely defer, ſtops our career in ſin, and by acquainting us with our ſelves, ſhews us where our danger lies, and how we are to avert it, what breaches are made in upon our ſouls, and how we muſt repair them; all which are with many ſeldom thought of, but when the time of communicating approaches. We live ſo far off from our ſelves, know ſo little what is done in us, that we anſwer the deſcription the Prophet makes of the ſurprize of *Babylon*, of which the King knew nothing till poſt after poſt run to inform him that his *City was taken at one end*, Jer. 51. 14. We often lie ſecure while the enemy is within our walls, and therefore they are friendly alarms which the Sacrament gives us to look to our defence. But if when the Trumpet ſounds none will prepare himſelf to the Battel, if when the Miniſter gives warning of a Sacrament, and the preparation it requires, we go our ways, and with *Gallio care for none of thoſe things*, or with *Felix*, Acts 24. 26. *put it off to a convenient time*; we wilfully expoſe our ſelves, and 'tis but juſt Chriſt's dreadful menace ſhould be executed upon us, that we *die in our ſins*, who will fruſtrate ſuch an opportunity of a reſcue from them.

70. But

But aſſiſting grace and ſpiritual ſtrength are conferr'd.

70. But 'tis not only this remoter and accidental advantage (this preventing grace) which the Holy Euchariſt affords; it contains yet greater and more intrinſick benefits, is a Spring of aſſiſting Grace alſo: 'tis a Magazine of Spiritual Artillery to fortifie us againſt all aſſaults of the Devil, the great Catholicon for all the Maladies of our Souls, that which, if duly received, will qualifie us to make St. *Paul*'s boaſt, *Phil.* 4. 13. *I can do all things thro' Chriſt which ſtrengthens me.* In a word, 'tis to us whatever we need, Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, and Redemption, becauſe it poſſeſſes us of him who is ſo, 1 *Cor.* 1. 31. So that whenever we neglect it, we manifeſtly betray our own intereſt, and do implicitly chuſe death whilſt we thus run from life.

There is a concurrence of all ſorts of arguments for this duty.

71. Thus we ſee there is a concurrence of all ſorts of Arguments for this Duty; oh that ſome (at leaſt) of them may prevail! If we are not tractable enough to do it in Obedience, yet let us be ſo ingenious as to do it for Love, for Gratitude; or if for neither of thoſe, let us be at leaſt ſo wiſe as to do it for Intereſt and Advantage. I know people are apt to pretend buſineſs; the Farm and the Oxen muſt excuſe their coming to the Feaſt: but alas! what buſineſs can there be of equal neceſſity or advantage with this? Yet even that Apology is ſuperſeded to thoſe I now ſpeak to, who as I obſerved before have leiſure more than enough; ſo that it would be one part of the benefit, its taking up ſome of their time: let me therefore earneſtly beſeech them, not to grudge a few of their vacant hours to this ſo happy an employment.

We do not uſe to diſappoint an invitation.

72. Did any of their near Friends and Relations invite them to an interview, they would not think him too importune, tho' he repeated the ſummons weekly, nay daily, but would punctually obſerve the meeting: and when their Saviour much ſeldomer entreats their company, ſhall he not obtain it? muſt he never ſee them but at two or three ſolemn times of the year? and ſhall they wonder at any intervening invitation (as the Shunamite's husband did at her going to the Prophet when it was *neither new Moon nor Sabbath*, 2 *Kings* 4. 23.) and tell him 'tis not yet *Eaſter* or *Chriſtmas*? this were not only to be irreligious, but rude; and methinks thoſe who ſtand ſo much upon punctilios of Civility to one another, ſhould not then only lay aſide their good manners when they are to treat with their Redeemer. Certainly he is not ſo unpleaſant company that they need ſhun his converſe: if he do appear ſo to any, 'tis that ſhunning that is the cauſe of it. He do's not open his treaſures to ſtrangers: they that come now and then for form ſake, no wonder if their entertainment be as cold as their addreſs. They that would indeed *taſte how ſweet the Lord is*, *Pſal.* 34. 8. muſt by the frequency of their coming, ſhew the heartineſs of it; and then they would indeed find it *a feaſt of fat things*, as the Prophet ſpeaks.

The uſe of the Sacrament would encreaſe the love and value of it.

73. In a word, let them but make experiment, reſolve for a certain time (be it a year or thereabouts) to omit no opportunity, (and withall no due preparation) of communicating, I am a little confident they will afterwards need no other importunity but that of their own longings: the expiration of that definite time will prove the beginning of an indefinite, and their reſolutions will have no other limit but their lives. For certainly there is not in all the whole myſtery of Godlineſs, in all the Oeconomy of the Goſpel, ſo expedite, ſo infallible a means of growth in Grace, as a frequent and worthy participation of this bleſſed Sacrament. I cannot therefore more pertinently cloſe this Section, than with this exhortation to it, by which they will not only compleat all their Devotions,

crown and hallow the reſt of their Oblations to God, but they will be advanced alſo in all parts of practical Piety. For tho' this and other ſacred Offices be perform'd in the Church, the efficacy of them is not circumſcribed within thoſe walls, but follows the devout ſoul thro' all the occurrences of human life.

The conviction of God's preſence in the Sanctuary, will fix an aw of it every where elſe.

74. She that has intently conſider'd the preſence of God in the Sanctuary, has learn'd ſo much of his Ubiquity, that ſhe will not eaſily forget it in other places; and ſhe that remembers that, will need no other guard to ſecure her innocence, no other incentive to animate her endeavours, ſince ſhe is view'd by him who is equally powerful to puniſh or reward, who regards not the perſons of the mighty, nor can be aw'd into the connivance of a crime. Indeed a ſerious advertance to the divine Preſence, is the moſt certain curb to all diſorderly appetites, as on the contrary the *not having God before their eyes*, is in Scripture the comprehenſive deſcription of the moſt wretchleſs profligated ſtate of ſin. It concerns therefore all thoſe who aſpire to true Piety, to nouriſh that awful ſenſe in their hearts, as that which will beſt enable them to practice the Apoſtle's advice, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *To cleanſe themſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, and to perfect holineſs in the fear of God.*

All excellencies in women that have not Piety, are but jewels of Gold in a Swine's ſnout.

75. I am ſenſible that this Section is ſpun out to a length very unproportionable to the former; but as the principal wheel in an artificial movement may be allow'd a bulk ſomewhat anſwerable to its uſe, ſo upon the ſame account, the ſize of this is not unjuſtifiable, the Piety which this deſigns to recommend being the one neceſſary thing, which muſt influence all other endowments. We know the coarſe reſemblance *Solomon* makes of *a fair woman without diſcretion, that ſhe is like a jewel of gold in a ſwine's ſnout*, *Prov.* 11. 12. but even that diſcretion (if any ſuch could be) without Piety were but the adding one jewel more, expoſing another valuable thing to the ſame deſpicable ridiculous uſe. But to ſpeak truly there is no real diſcretion, where there is no Religion. And therefore *Solomon* ſeems in this place to underſtand by it that practical Wiſdom, which in the ſacred Dialect (his writings eſpecially) is equivalent to the fear of the Lord. 'Tis true, there may be a rallying wit to ſcoff and abuſe, a ſerpentine Wilineſs to undermine and deceive; but that ſort of Wiſdom (like that of *Achitophel*) finally converts into Fooliſhneſs, do's very often appear to do ſo in this life, but muſt certainly in the next, becauſe it builds upon a falſe bottom, prefers temporal things before eternal. And as neither Beauty nor Wit (the two celebrated accompliſhments of women) ſo will neither Greatneſs nor Honour give any advantage without Piety: 'twill only (as has been already obſerv'd) make them more exemplary ſinners, inflame the account, and ſo expoſe them to a greater degree of condemnation. For ſure 'tis not their Sex that will reſcue them from the diſmal denunciation of the wiſe Man, *Wiſd.* 6. 6. *Mighty men ſhall be mightily tormented.* I conclude all with another irrefragable Maxim of the ſame Author, *Whether one be Rich, Noble, or Poor, their Glory is the Fear of the Lord.*

THE
Ladies Calling.

PART II. SECT. I.

Of Virgins.

1. WE have taken a view of thoſe general Qualifications, which are at once the Duty and the Ornament of the Female Sex conſider'd at large: Theſe, like the common Genus, involve all. But there are alſo ſpecific differences ariſing from the ſeveral circumſtances and ſtates of Life, ſome whereof may exact greater degrees even of the former Vertues, and all may have ſome diſtinct and peculiar Requiſits adapted to that particular ſtate and condition: and of theſe our propos'd method engages us now to conſider. Human life is full of viciſſitudes and changes, ſo that 'tis impoſſible to enumerate all the leſſer accidental alterations to which it is liable. But the principal and moſt diſtinct Scenes, in which a Woman can be ſuppos'd regularly to be an Actor, are theſe three, *Virginity*, *Marriage*, and *Widowhood*: which as they differ widely from each other, ſo for the diſcharging their reſpective Duties, there are peculiar cautions worthy to be adverted to.

There are beſides the general duties of Piety, particular ones referring to the ſeveral ſtates of life.

2. Virginity is firſt, in order of time, and if we will take St. *Paul's* judgment, in reſpect of excellence alſo, 1 *Cor.* 7. And indeed, ſhe that preſerves her ſelf in that ſtate upon the account he mentions, v. 33. that *ſhe may care for the things that are of the Lord, that ſhe may be holy both in Body and Spirit*, deſerves a great deal of Veneration, as making one of the neareſt approaches to the Angelical State. And accordingly, in the Primitive Times, ſuch a Virginity was had in a ſingular Eſtimation, and by the aſſignment of the School-men hath a particular Coronet of Glory belonging to it. Nay even among the Heathens, a conſecrated Virgin was lookt on as a thing moſt ſacred. The Roman Veſtals had extraordinary priviledges allowed them by the State: and they were generally held in ſuch Reverence, that Teſtaments and other Depoſitums of the greateſt Truſt were uſually committed to their Cuſtody, as to the ſureſt and moſt inviolable Sanctuary. Nay their preſence was ſo to convicted Malefactors; the Magiſtrates veiling their *faſces* when they appear'd, and giving up the Criminal to the commanding Interceſſion of Virgin Innocence.

Virginity is the firſt as in time, ſo alſo in excellency.

3. As for the Religious Orders of Virgins in the preſent Roman Church, tho' ſome, and thoſe very great abuſes have crept in; yet I think 'twere to be wiſh'd, that thoſe who ſuppreſt them in this Nation, had confin'd themſelves within the bounds of a Reformation, by chooſing rather to rectifie and regulate, than aboliſh them.

'Twere to be wiſht that the abuſes of the Roman Church had bin reform'd without an abolition.

One may be a Votareſs tho' not profeſt.

4. But tho' there be not among us ſuch Societies, yet there may be *Nuns* who are not Profeſt. She who has devoted her heart to God, and the better to ſecure his Intereſt againſt the moſt inſinuating rival of Human Love, intends to admit none, and praies that ſhe may not; does by thoſe humble purpoſes conſecrate her ſelf to God: and perhaps more acceptably, than if her preſumtion ſhould make her more poſitive, and engage her in a Vow ſhe is not ſure to perform.

The contemt under which Virginity is fall'n how to be avoided.

5. But this is a caſe do's not much need ſtating in our Clime, wherein Women are ſo little tranſported with this zeal of voluntary Virginity, that there are but few can find patience for it when neceſſary. An old Maid is now thought ſuch a Curſe as no Poetic Fury can exceed, look'd on the moſt calamitous Creature in nature. And I ſo far yield to the opinion, as to confeſs it ſo to thoſe who are kept in that ſtate againſt their wills; but ſure the original of that miſery is from the deſire, not the reſtraint of Marriage: let them but ſuppreſs that once, and the other will never be their Infelicity. But I muſt not be ſo unkind to the Sex, as to think 'tis always ſuch deſire that gives them averſion to Celibacy; I doubt not many are frighted only with the vulgar contemt under which that ſtate lies: for which if there be no cure, yet there is the ſame armor againſt this, which is againſt all other cauſeleſs Reproaches, *viz.* to contemn it. Yet I am a little apt to believe there may be a prevention in the caſe. If the ſuperannuated Virgins would behave themſelves with Gravity and Reſervedneſs, addict themſelves to the ſtricteſt Vertue and Piety, they would give the World ſome cauſe to believe, 'twas not their neceſſity, but their choice which kept them unmarried; that they were pre-engag'd to a better Amour, eſpous'd to the Spiritual Bridegroom: and this would give them among the ſoberer ſort, at leaſt the reverence and eſteem of Matrons. Or if after all caution and endeavor, they chance to fall under the Tongues of malicious ſlanderers; this is no more than happens in all other Inſtances of Duty: and if contemt be to be avoided, Chriſtianity it ſelf muſt be quitted as well as Virgin Chaſtity. But if on the other ſide they endeavor to diſguiſe their Age by all the impoſtures and gaieties of a youthful dreſs and behavior, if they ſtill herd themſelves among the youngeſt and vaineſt company, betray a young Mind in an aged Body; this muſt certainly expoſe them to ſcorn and cenſure. If no Play, no Ball or Dancing-meeting can eſcape them, people will undoubtedly conclude that they deſire to put off themſelves, to meet with Chapmen, who ſo conſtantly keep the Fairs. I wiſh therefore they would more univerſally try the former expedients, which I am confident is the beſt Amulet againſt the reproch they ſo much dread, and may alſo deliver them from the danger of a more coſtly remedy; I mean that of an unequal and imprudent Match, which many have ruſh'd upon as they have ran frighted from the other, and ſo by an unhappy contradiction, do both ſtay long and marry haſtily, gall their necks to ſpare their ears, and run into the Yoke rather than hear ſo ſlight and unreaſonable a Reproch. They need not, I think, be upbraided with the folly of ſuch an Election, ſince their own Experience is (to many of them) but too ſevere a Monitor. I ſhall not inſiſt farther on this, but having given the elder Virgins that Enſign of their Seniority as to ſtand firſt in my Diſcourſe, I ſhall now addreſs more generally to the reſt.

The modeſty of Virgins.

6. And here the two grand Elements eſſential to the Virgin ſtate, are Modeſty and Obedience, which tho' neceſſary to all, yet are in a more eminent degree requir'd here. And therefore, tho' I have ſpoken largely of

the vertue of Modeſty in the firſt part of this Tract, yet it will not be impertinent to make ſome further reflections on it, by way of application to Virgins, in whom Modeſty ſhould appear in its higheſt elevation, and ſhould come up to Shamefac'dneſs. Her look, her ſpeech, her whole behavior ſhould own an humble diſtruſt of her ſelf; ſhe is to look on her ſelf but as a Novice, a Probationer in the World, and muſt take this time rather to learn and obſerve, than to dictate and preſcribe. Indeed there is ſcarce any thing looks more indecent, than to ſee a young Maid too forward and confident in her talk. 'Tis the Opinion of the Wiſe-man, *Eccleſ.* 32.8. that *a young man ſhould ſcearce ſpeak, tho' twice ask'd*: in proportion to which, 'twill ſure not become a young Woman, whoſe Sex puts her under greater reſtraints, to be either importunate or magiſterial in her diſcourſe. And tho' that which former Ages call'd Boldneſs is now only Aſſurance and good Breeding, yet we have ſeen ſuch bad ſuperſtructures upon that Foundation, as ſure will not much recommend it to any conſidering Perſon.

Nothing is more nice and delicate than a Maiden vertue.

7. But there is another breach of Modeſty, as it relates to Chaſtity, in which they are yet more eſpecially concern'd. The very name of Virgin imports a moſt critical niceneſs in that point. Every indecent curioſity, or impure fancy, is a deflowering of the mind, and every the leaſt corruption of them gives ſome degrees of defilement to the Body too. For between the ſtate of pure immaculate Virginity and arrant Proſtitution, there are many intermedial ſteps; and ſhe that makes any of them, is ſo far departed from her firſt Integrity. She that liſtens to any wanton Diſcourſe has violated her Ears, ſhe that ſpeaks any, her tongue; every immodeſt glance vitiates her eye, and every the lighteſt act of dalliance leaves ſomething of ſtain and ſullage behind it. There is therefore a moſt rigorous caution requiſite herein: for as nothing is more clean and white than a perfect Virginity, ſo every the leaſt ſpot or ſoil is the more diſcernable. Beſides, Youth is for the moſt part flexible, and eaſily warps into a crookedneſs, and therefore can never ſet it ſelf too far from a temtation. Our tender bloſſoms we are fain to ſkreen and ſhelter, becauſe every unkindly air nips and deſtroies them: and nothing can be more nice and delicate than a Maiden Vertue, which ought not to be expos'd to any of thoſe malignant airs which may blaſt and corrupt it, of which God knows there are too many, ſome that blow from within, and others from without.

'Tis endanger'd by Curioſity.

8. Of the firſt ſort, there is none more miſchievous than Curioſity, a temtation which foil'd human Nature even in Paradiſe: and therefore ſure a feeble Girl ought not to truſt her ſelf with that which ſubdued her better fortified Parent. The truth is, an affected Ignorance cannot be ſo blamable in other caſes as it is commendable in this. Indeed it is the ſureſt and moſt invincible Guard; for ſhe who is curious to know Indecent things, 'tis odds but ſhe will too ſoon and too dearly buy the learning. The ſuppreſſing and deteſting all ſuch Curioſities, is therefore that eminent fundamental piece of Continenee I would recommend to them, as that which will protect and ſecure all the reſt.

By ill Company and Idleneſs.

9. But when they have ſet this guard upon themſelves, they muſt provide againſt Foreign aſſaults too; the moſt dangerous whereof I take to be ill Company and Idleneſs. Againſt the firſt they muſt provide by a prudent choice of Converſation, which ſhould generally be of their own Sex; yet not all of that neither, but ſuch as will at leaſt entertain them innocently if not profitably. Againſt the ſecond they may ſecure them-

ſelves by a conſtant ſeries of Emploiments: I mean not ſuch frivolous ones as are more idle than doing nothing, but ſuch as are ingenious, and ſome way worth their time: wherein as the firſt is to be given to the offices of Piety, ſo in the Intervals of thoſe, there are divers others, by which they may not unuſefully fill up the vacancies of their time: ſuch are the acquiring of any of thoſe ornamental improvements which become their Quality, as Writing, Needle-works, Languages, Muſic, or the like. If I ſhould here inſert the art of Oeconomy and Houſhold Managery, I ſhould not think I affronted them in it; that being the moſt proper Feminine buſineſs, from which neither wealth nor greatneſs can totally abſolve them: and a little of the Theory in their Parents houſe, would much aſſiſt them towards the Practic when they come to their own. In a word, there are many parts of knowledge uſeful for Civil as well as Divine Life; and the improving themſelves in any of thoſe, is a rational Emploiment.

By Gaming.

10. But I confeſs I know not how to reduce to that Head many of thoſe things which from divertiſements, are now ſtept up to be the ſolemn buſineſs of many young Ladies, (and I doubt of ſome old.) Such is in the firſt place Gaming, a recreation whoſe lawfulneſs I queſtion not, whilſt it keeps within the bounds of a recreation: but when it ſets up for a Calling, I know not whence it derives its licenſe. And a Calling ſure it ſeems to be with ſome; a laborious one too, ſuch as they toil night and day at, nay do not allow themſelves that remiſſion which the Laws both of God and Man have provided for the meaneſt Mechanic: the Sabbath is to them no day of reſt, but this Trade go's on when all Shops are ſhut. I know not how they ſatisfie themſelves in ſuch an habitual waſte of their time, (beſides all the incidental faults of Avarice and anger,) but I much doubt that Plea, whatſoever it is which paſſes with them, will ſcarce hold weight at his Tribunal, who has commanded us to *redeem*, not fling away *our time*.

By reading Romances.

11. There is another thing to which ſome devote a very conſiderable part of their time, and that is the reading Romances, which ſeems now to be thought the peculiar and only becoming ſtudy of young Ladies. I confeſs their Youth may a little adapt it to them when they were Children, and I wiſh they were always in their event as harmleſs; but I fear they often leave ill impreſſions behind them. Thoſe amorous Paſſions, which 'tis their deſign to paint to the utmoſt Life, are apt to inſinuate themſelves into their unwary Readers, and by an unhappy inverſion a Copy ſhall produce an Original. When a poor young Creature ſhall read there of ſome triumphant Beauty, that has I know not how many captiv'd Knights proſtrate at her feet, ſhe will probably be tempted to think it a fine thing: and may reflect how much ſhe looſes time, that has not yet ſubdu'd one heart: and then her buſineſs will be to ſpread her nets, lay her toils to catch ſomebody who will more fatally enſnare her. And when ſhe has once wound herſelf into an Amour, thoſe Authors are ſubtil Caſuiſts for all difficult caſes that may occur in it, will inſtruct in the neceſſary Artifices of deluding Parents and Friends, and put her ruin perfectly in her own power. And truly this ſeems to be ſo natural a conſequent of this ſort of ſtudy, that of all the divertiſements that look ſo innocently, they can ſcarce fall upon any more hazardous. Indeed, 'tis very difficult to imagine what vaſt miſchief is done to the World, by the falſe notions and images of things; particularly of Love and Honor, thoſe nobleſt concerns of human Life, repreſent-

ed in theſe Mirrors. But when we conſider upon what principles the Duelliſts and Hectors of the Age defend their Outrages, and how great a Devotion is paid to Luſt, inſtead of virtuous Love, we cannot be to ſeek for the Goſpel which makes theſe Doctrines appear Orthodox.

12. As for the entertainments which they find abroad, they may be innocent, or otherwiſe, according as they are managed. The common entercourſe of Civility is a debt to Humanity, and therefore mutual Viſits may often be neceſſary, and ſo (in ſome degree) may be ſeveral harmleſs and healthful recreations which may call them abroad, for I write not now to Nuns, and have no purpoſe to confine them to a Cloiſter. Yet on the other ſide to be always wandring, is the condition of a Vagabond; and of the two, 'tis better to be a Priſoner to ones home than a ſtranger. *Solomon* links it with ſome very unlaudable qualities of a Woman, *Prov.* 7. 11. that *her feet abide not in her houſe*; and 'tis an unhappy impotence not to be able to ſtay at home, when there is any thing to be ſeen abroad: that any Mask, or Revel, any Jollity of others muſt be their rack and torment, if they cannot get to it. Alas ſuch meetings are not ſo ſure to be ſafe, that they had need be frequent, and they are of all others leaſt like to be ſafe to thoſe, who much dote on them. And therefore thoſe that find they do ſo, had need to counterbiaſs their minds, and ſet them to ſomthing better, and by more ſerious entertainments ſupplant thoſe vanities, which at the beſt are childiſh, and may often prove worſe; it being too probable that thoſe *Dinah*'s which are ſtill gadding, tho' on pretence to ſee only the daughters of the Land, *Gen.* 34. may at laſt meet with a ſon of *Hamor*. *By viſits.*

13. There is alſo another great devourer of time ſubſervient to the former, I mean Dreſſing: for they that love to be ſeen much abroad, will be ſure to be ſeen in the moſt exact Form. And this is an emploiment that do's not ſteal but challenge their time; what they waſt here is *cum Privilegio*, it being by the verdict of this age the proper buſineſs, the one ſcience wherein a young Lady is to be perfectly verſt: ſo that now all vertuous emulation is converted into this ſingle Ambition, who ſhall excel in this Faculty. A vanity which I confeſs is more excuſable in the youngeſt than the elder ſort: they being ſuppoſable not yet to have outworn the reliques of their Childhood, to which toies and gaiety were proportionable. Beſides, 'tis ſure allowable upon a ſoberer account, that they who deſign Marriage ſhould give themſelves the advantage of decent Ornaments, and not by the negligent rudeneſs of their Dreſs belie Nature, and render themſelves leſs amiable than ſhe has made them. But all this being granted, 'twill by no means juſtifie that exceſſive curioſity and ſolicitude, that expence of time and mony too which is now uſed. A very moderate degree of all thoſe will ſerve for that ordinary decency which they need provide for, will keep them from the reproach of an affected Singularity, which is as much as a ſober Perſon need take care for. And I muſt take leave to ſay, that in order to Marriage, ſuch a moderation is much likelier to ſucceed than the contrary extravagance. Among the prudenter ſort of Men I am ſure it is, if it be not among the looſe and vain, againſt which 'twill be their guard, and ſo do them the greater ſervice. For certainly, he that chooſes a wife for thoſe qualities for which a wiſe man would refuſe her, underſtands ſo little what Marriage is, as portends no great felicity to her that ſhall have him. But if they deſire to marry Men of ſobriety and diſcretion, they are obliged in juſtice to bring the ſame qualities they expect, which will be very ill-evidenced by *By dreſſing.*

that exceſs and vanity we now ſpeak of.

This ſetting themſelves out, of young Ladies, which they deſign for their preferment, is a great hindrance of it.

14. For to ſpeak a plain (tho' perhaps ungrateful) truth, this (together with ſome of the modiſh liberties now in uſe) is it, which keeps ſo many young Ladies about the Town unmarried, till they looſe the Epithet of young. Sober Men are afraid to venture upon a humor ſo diſagreeing to their own, leſt whilſt (according to the primitive reaſon of Marriage) they ſeek a help, they eſpouſe a ruin. But this is eſpecially dreadful to a plain Country Gentleman, who looks upon one of theſe fine Women as a Gaudy Idol, to whom if he once become a Votary, he muſt ſacrifice a great part of his Fortune, and all his Content. How reaſonable that apprehenſion is, the many wracks of conſiderable Families do too evidently atteſt. But I preſume ſome of the nicer Ladies have ſuch a contemt of any thing that they pleaſe to call Ruſtic, that they will not much regret the averting of thoſe whom they ſo deſpiſe. They will not perhaps, while they are in purſuit or hopes of others; but when thoſe fail, theſe will be look'd on as a welcome Reſerve: and therefore 'twill be no Prudence to cut themſelves off from that laſt reſort, leſt they (as many have done) betake themſelves to much worſe. For as in many inſtances 'tis the Country which feeds and maintains the grandeur of the Town, ſo of all commerces there, Marriage would ſooneſt fail, if all Rural ſupplies were cut off.

The adorning of the mind were a more laudable endeavor.

15. But I have perſued this ſpeculation farther than perhaps my Virgin Readers will thank me for: I ſhall return to that which it was brought to inforce, and beſeech them, that if not to Men, yet to approve themſelves to God, they will confine themſelves in the matter of their Dreſs within the due limits of Decency and Sobriety. I ſhall not direct them to thoſe ſtrict Rules which *Tertullian* and ſome other of the ancient Fathers have preſcrib'd in this matter; my Petition is only, That our Virgins would at leaſt ſo take care of their Bodies, as Perſons that alſo have a Soul: which if they can be perſwaded to, they may reſerve much of their time for more worthy uſes than thoſe of the Comb, the Tuillets, and the Glaſs. And truly, 'tis not a little their concern to do ſo, for this Spring of their age is that Critical Inſtant that muſt either confirm or blaſt the hopes of all the ſucceeding Seaſons. The minds of young People are uſually compar'd to a blank ſheet of Paper, equally capable of the beſt or the worſt Impreſſions: 'tis pitty they ſhould be fill'd with childiſh Scrawls and little inſignificant Figures, but 'tis ſhame and horror they ſhould be ſtain'd with any vicious Characters, any blots of Impurity or Diſhonor. To prevent which, let the ſevereſt notions of Modeſty and Honor be early and deeply impreſt upon their Souls, graven as with the point of a Diamond, that they may be as indelible as they are indiſpenſibly neceſſary to the Virgin ſtate.

The Obedience of Virgins.

16. There is alſo another very requiſite Quality, and that is Obedience. The younger ſort of Virgins are ſuppos'd to have Parents, or if any has bin ſo unhappy as to looſe them early, they commonly are left in the charge of ſome Friend or Guardian, that is to ſupply the place: ſo they cannot be to ſeek to whom this Obedience is to be paid. And it is not more their Duty than their Intereſt to pay it. Youth is apt to be fooliſh in its Deſigns, and heady in the purſuit of them; and there can be nothing more deplorable than to have it left to it ſelf. And therefore God, who permits not even the Brutes to deſtitute their young ones till they attain to the perfection of their Kind, has put Children under the guidance and protection of their Parents, 'till by the maturing of

their Judgments they are qualified to be their own Conductors. Now this Obedience (as that which is due to all other Superiors) is to extend it ſelf to all things that are either good or indifferent, and has no clauſe of exception, but only where the Command is unlawful. And in ſo wide a ſcene of Action, there will occur ſo many particular occaſions of ſubmiſſion, that they had need have a great reverence of their Parents judgments, and diſtruſt of their own. And if it ſhould happen that ſome Parents are not qualified to give them the former, yet the general imbecillity of their age, will remain a conſtant ground of the latter: ſo that they may ſafelier venture themſelves to their Parents miſguidance than their own, by how much the errors of Humility and Obedience, are leſs malignant than thoſe of Preſumtion and Arrogance.

There is among youth a moſt miſchievous inſolence to contemn advice becauſe it comes from a Parent.

17. But this is a Doctrine which will ſcarce paſs for Orthodox with many of the young Women of our daies, with whom 'tis prejudice enough againſt the prudenteſt advice, that it comes from their Parents. 'Tis the grand Ingenuity of theſe Times to turn every thing into Ridicule; and if a Girl can but rally ſmartly upon the ſober admonition of a Parent, ſhe concludes ſhe is the abler Perſon, takes her ſelf for a Wit, and the other for a Fop; (a Bugbear word, deviſed to fright all ſeriouſneſs and ſobriety out of the World) and learns not only to diſobey, but to contemn. Indeed the great confidence that Youth now ſeems to have of it ſelf, as it is very indecent, ſo it is extremely pernicious. Children that will attemt to go alone before their time, oft get dangerous falls: and when thoſe who are but little removed from Children, ſhall caſt off the wiſer conduct of others, they oft ſadly miſcarry by their own.

So alſo to avoid their company.

18. I know this Age has ſo great a contemt of the former, that 'tis but matter of ſcorn to alledge any of their Cuſtoms, elſe I ſhould ſay that the liberties that are taken now, would then have been ſtartled at. They that ſhould then have ſeen a young Maid rambling abroad without her Mother, or ſome other prudent Perſon, would have look'd on her as a ſtray, and thought it but a neighborly office to have brought her home: whereas now 'tis a rarity to ſee them in any company graver than themſelves, and ſhe that go's with her Parent (unleſs it be ſuch a Parent as is as wild as her ſelf) thinks ſhe do's but walk abroad with her Jailor. But ſure there are no ſmall miſchiefs that attend this liberty; for it leaves them perfectly to the choice of their company, a thing of too weighty an importance for giddy heads to determin: who will be ſure to elect ſuch as are of their own humor, with whom they may keep up a traffick of little Impertinences and trifling Entertainments; and ſo by conſequence, condemn themſelves never to grow wiſer, which they might do by an Ingenious Converſation. Nay 'tis well if that negative will be the worſt, for it gives opportunity to any that have ill deſigns upon them. It will be eaſy getting into their company, who have no guard to keep any body out, and as eaſie by little compliances and flatteries to inſinuate into their good Graces, who have not the ſagacity to diſcern to what inſidious purpoſes thoſe blandiſhments are directed: and when they once begin to nibble at that Bait, to be pleaſed with the Courtſhip, 'tis great odds they do not eſcape the Hook.

Young women having no guard about them, are frequently enſnar'd.

19. Alas, how many poor innocent Creatures have been thus indiſcernibly enſnared; have at firſt perhaps only liked the Wit and Raillery, perhaps the Language and Addreſs, then the Freedom and good Humor; till at laſt they come to like the Perſon. It is therefore a moſt neceſſary

caution for young Women, not to truſt too much to their own conduct, but to own their dependance on thoſe, to whom God and Nature have ſubjected them, and to look on it not as their reſtraint and burden, but as their ſhelter and protection. For where once the authority of a Parent comes to be deſpis'd, tho' in the lighteſt inſtance, it laies the foundation of utmoſt Diſobedience. She that will not be preſcrib'd to in the choice of her ordinary diverting company, will leſs be ſo in chooſing the fixt Companion of her Life: and we find it often eventually true, That thoſe who govern themſelves in the former, will not be govern'd by their Friends in the latter, but by pre-engagements of their own, prevent their elections for them.

A ſelf-diſpoſal is the higheſt injury a child can do a Parent.

20. And this is one of the higheſt Injuries they can do their Parents, who have ſuch a native Right in them, that 'tis no leſs an Injuſtice than Diſobedience to diſpoſe of themſelves without them. This right of the Parent is ſo undoubted, that we find God himſelf gives way to it, and will not ſuffer the moſt Holy pretence, no not that of a Vow, to invade it, as we may ſee his own ſtating of the Caſe, *Numb.* 30. How will he then reſent it, to have this ſo indiſpenſable a Law violated upon the impulſe of an impotent Paſſion, an amorous Inclination? Nor is the folly leſs than the ſin: they injure and afflict their Parents, but they generally ruin and undo themſelves; and that upon a double account. Firſt, as to the ſecular part: thoſe that are ſo raſh as to make ſuch Matches, cannot be imagined ſo provident as to examin how agreeable 'tis to their Intereſt, or to contrive for any thing beyond the Marriage. The thoughts of their future temporal Conditions (like thoſe of the Eternal) can find no room amidſt their fooliſh Raptures, but as if Love were indeed that Deity which the Poets feigned it, they depend on it for all, and take no farther care. And event do's commonly too ſoon inſtruct them in the deceitfulneſs of that Truſt; Love being ſo unable to ſupport them that it cannot maintain it ſelf, but quickly expires when it has brought the Lovers into thoſe ſtraits from whence it cannot reſcue them. So that indeed it do's but play the Decoy with them, brings them into the nooſe, and then retires. For when ſecular Wants begin to pinch them, all the Tranſports of their Kindneſs do uſually convert into mutual Accuſations, for having made each other miſerable.

Is generally unfortunate.

21. And indeed there is no reaſon to expect any better event, becauſe in the ſecond place they forfeit their title to the Divine Bleſſing. Nay they put themſelves out of the capacity to ask it, it being a ridiculous Impudence to beg God to proſper the tranſgreſſions of his Law. Such Weddings ſeem to invoke only ſome of the Poetic Romantic Deities, *Venus* and *Hymen*, from whence they derive a happineſs as fictitious as are the Gods that are to ſend it. Let all Virgins therefore religiouſly obſerve this part of Obedience to their Parents, that they may not only have their Benediction but God's. And to that purpoſe let this be laid as a Fundamental Rule, That they never hearken to any propoſal of Marriage made them from any other hand; but when any ſuch Overture is made, divert the addreſs from her ſelf and direct it to her Parents, which will be the beſt teſt imaginable for any Pretender. For if he know himſelf worthy of her, he will not fear to avow his deſign to them; and therefore if he decline that, 'tis a certain Symptom, he is conſcious of ſomthing that he knows will not give a valuable conſideration: ſo that this courſe will repel no Suitor but ſuch as it is their Intereſt not to admit. Beſides, 'tis moſt agreeable to the Virgin Modeſty, which ſhould make Marriage an act rather of their obedience than their choice; and they that think their

Friends too ſlow pac'd in the matter, and ſeek to out-run them, give cauſe to ſuſpect they are ſpurr'd on by ſomwhat too warm deſires.

How far a Virgin may interpoſe her diſſent.

22. But as a Daughter is neither to anticipate, nor contradict the will of her Parent, ſo (to hang the ballance even) I muſt ſay ſhe is not oblig'd to force her own, by marrying where ſhe cannot love; for a negative voice in the caſe is ſure as much the Child's right as the Parent's. 'Tis true, ſhe ought well to examin the grounds of her averſion, and if they prove only childiſh and fanciful, ſhould endeavor to correct them by reaſon and ſober conſideration: but if after all ſhe cannot leave to hate, I think ſhe ſhould not proceed to Marry. I confeſs I ſee not how ſhe can, without a Sacrilegious Hypocriſie, vow ſo ſolemnly to love, where ſhe at the inſtant actually abhors: and where the married ſtate is begun with ſuch a Perjury, 'tis no wonder to find it continued on at the ſame rate, that other parts of the Vow be alſo violated, and that ſhe obſerve the Negative part no more than the Poſitive, and as little forſake others, as ſhe do's heartily cleave to her Husband. I fear this is a conſequence whereof there are too many ſad Inſtances now extant. For tho' doubtleſs there are ſome Vertues which will hold out againſt all the temptations their averſions can give, nay which do at laſt even conquer thoſe averſions, and render their duty as eaſy as they have kept it ſafe: yet we find there are but ſome that do ſo, that it is no inſeparable property of the Sex, and therefore it is ſure too hazardous an Experiment for any of them to venture on.

The Injuſtice of marrying for Fortune.

23. And if they may not upon the more generous motive of Obedience, much leſs may they upon the worſe inducements of Avarice and Ambition. For a Woman to make a Vow to the Man, and yet intend only to marry his Fortune, or his Title, is the baſeſt inſincerity, and ſuch as in any other kind of civil Contracts would not only have the infamy but the puniſhment of a Cheat. Nor will it at all ſecure them, that in this 'tis only liable to God's Tribunal; for that is not like to make the doom leſs but more heavy, it being, as the Apoſtle witneſſes, *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, Heb.* 10. 31. In a word, Marriage is God's Ordinance, and ſhould be conſider'd as ſuch, not made a ſtale to any unworthy deſign. And it may well be preſum'd one cauſe why ſo few Matches are happy, that they are not built upon a right Foundation. Some are grounded upon Wealth, ſome on Beauty, too ſandy bottoms God knows to raiſe any laſting Felicity on: whilſt in the interim, Vertue and Piety, the only ſolid Baſis for that Superſtructure, are ſcarce ever conſider'd. Thus God is commonly left out of the conſultation. The Lawyers are reſorted to, to ſecure the Settlements, all ſorts of Artificers to make up the Equipage, but he is neither adviſ'd with as to the Motives, nor ſcarce ſupplicated as to the event of Wedding. Indeed 'tis a deplorable ſight to ſee with what lightneſs and unconcernedneſs young people go to that weightieſt action of their lives; that a Marriage-day is but a kind of Bacchanal, a more licens'd avow'd Revel; when if they duly conſider it, 'tis the hinge upon which their future Life moves, which turns them over to a happy or miſerable Being, and therefore ought to be enter'd upon with the greateſt Seriouſneſs and Devotion. Our Church adviſes excellently in the Preface to Matrimony; and I wiſh they would not only give it the hearing at the time, but make it their ſtudy a good while before: yea and the Marriage Vow too, which is ſo ſtrict and awful a Bond, that methinks they had need well weigh every Branch of it e're they enter it, and by the ferventeſt Praiers implore that God, who is the Witneſs, to be their Aſſiſtant too in its performance.

SECT. II.

Of Wives.

The ſingle relation of a Wife draws in many others.

1. AND now having conducted the Virgin to the entrance of another ſtate, I muſt ſhift the Scene, and attend her thither alſo. And here ſhe is lanch'd into a wide Sea, that one relation of a Wife drawing after it many others. For as ſhe Eſpouſes the Man, ſo ſhe do's his Obligations alſo: and where-ever he by ties of Nature or Alliance ows a Reverence or Kindneſs, ſhe is no leſs a Debtor. Her Marriage is an adoption into his Family; and therefore ſhe is to pay to every Branch of it, what their Stations there do reſpectively require: to define which more particularly, would be a work of more length than profit. I ſhall therefore confine the preſent Conſideration to the Relation ſhe ſtands in to her Husband, and (what is uſually concomitant with that) her Children, and her Servants; and ſo ſhall conſider her in the three capacities, of a Wiſe, a Mother, and a Miſtreſs.

The marriage debt to the perſon of a Husband.

2. In that of a Wife, her duty has ſeveral Aſpects, as it relates, firſt to his Perſon, ſecondly to his Reputation, thirdly to his Fortune. The firſt debt to his Perſon is Love, which we find ſet as the prime Article in the Marriage-Vow. And indeed that is the moſt Eſſential requiſite: without this, 'tis only a Bargain and Compact, a Tyranny perhaps on the Mans part, and a Slavery on the Woman's. 'Tis love only that cements the Hearts, and where that Union is wanting, 'tis but a ſhadow, a Carcaſs of Marriage. Therefore as it is very neceſſary to bring ſome degree of that to this State; ſo 'tis no leſs to maintain and improve it in it. This is it which facilitates all other duties of Marriage; makes the Yoke ſit ſo lightly, that it rather pleaſes than galls. It ſhould therefore be the ſtudy of Wives to preſerve this Flame, that like the Veſtal Fire it may never go out; and to that end carefully to guard it from all thoſe things which are naturally apt to extinguiſh it: of which kind are all frowardneſs and little perverſneſs of humor, all ſullen and moroſe behavior; which by taking off from the delight and complacency of Converſation, will by degrees wear off the kindneſs.

Of avoiding Jealouſy.

3. But of all, I know nothing more dangerous than that unhappy Paſſion of Jealouſie; which tho' 'tis ſaid to be the Child of Love, yet, like the Viper, its Birth is the certain deſtruction of the Parent. As therefore they muſt be nicely careful to give their Husbands no color, no leaſt umbrage for it; ſo ſhould they be as reſolute to reſiſt all that occurs to themſelves: be ſo far from that buſie Curioſity, that induſtry to find cauſes of ſuſpicion; that even where they preſented themſelves they ſhould avert the conſideration, put the moſt candid construction upon any doubtful action. And indeed, Charity in this inſtance has not more of the Dove than of the Serpent. It is infinitly the wiſeſt courſe, both in relation to her preſent quiet, and her future innocence. The entertaining a jealous fancy, is the admitting the moſt trecherous, the moſt diſturbing in-mate in the world, and ſhe opens her breaſt to a Fury that lets it in. 'Tis certainly one of the moſt enchanting frenzies imaginable, keeps her alwaies in a moſt reſtleſs importunate ſearch after that which ſhe dreads and abhors to find, and makes her equally miſerable when ſhe is injur'd, and when ſhe is not.

The miſchievous conſequents of it.

4. And as ſhe totally loſes her Eaſe, ſo 'tis odds but ſhe will part alſo with ſome degrees of her Innocence. Jealouſy is commonly attended with a black train: it muſters all the forces of our iraſcible part to abet its quarrel, Wrath and Anger, Malice and Revenge: and by how much the female impotence to govern thoſe paſſions is the greater, ſo much the more dangerous is it to admit that which will ſo ſurely ſet them in an uprore. For if *Jealouſy* be, as the Wiſe Man ſaies, *the rage of a man*, *Prov.* 6. 32. we may well think it may be the Fury, the Madneſs of a woman. And indeed all ages have given tragical inſtances of it, not only in the moſt indecent fierceneſs and clamor, but in the ſolemn miſchiefs of actual Revenges. Nay 'tis to be doubted there have bin ſome whoſe malice has rebounded; who have ruin'd themſelves in ſpight, have bin adulterous by way of retaliation, and taken more ſcandalous liberties than thoſe they complain'd of in their Husbands. And when ſuch enormous effects as theſe are the iſſues of jealouſy, it ought to keep women on the ſtricteſt guard againſt it.

What to be done in caſe of manifeſt falſeneſs.

5. But perhaps it may be ſaid that ſome are not left to their Jealouſy and conjectures, but have more demonſtrative proofs. In this age 'tis indeed no ſtrange thing for men to publiſh their ſin as *Sodom*, and the offender do's ſomtimes not diſcover but boaſt his Crime. In this caſe I confeſs 'twill be ſcarce poſſible to disbelieve him: but even here a wife has this advantage, that ſhe is out of the pain of Suſpence. She knows the utmoſt, and therefore is now at leiſure to convert all that induſtry which ſhe would have uſed for the diſcovery, to fortify her ſelf againſt a known Calamity; which ſure ſhe may as well do in this as in any other; a patient Submiſſion being the one Catholicon in all diſtreſſes; and as the ſlighteſt can overwhelm us if we add our own impatience towards our ſinking, ſo the greateſt cannot if we deny that aid. They are therefore far in the wrong, who, in caſe of this injury, purſue their husbands with virulencies and reproches. This is, as *Solomon* ſaies *Prov.* 25. 20. *The pouring vinegar upon niter*, applying corroſives when balſoms are moſt needed; whereby they not only encreaſe their own ſmart, but render the wound incurable. They are not thunders and earthquakes, but ſoft gentle rains that cloſe the ſciſſures of the ground; and the breaches of Wedlock will never be cemented by ſtorms and loud outcries. Many men have bin made worſe, but ſcarce ever any better by it: for guilt covets nothing more than an opportunity of recriminating; and where the husband can accuſe the wives Bitterneſs, he thinks he needs no other apology for his own Luſt.

The advantage of Patience.

6. A wiſe Diſſimulation, or very calm notice is ſure the likelieſt means of reclaiming: for where men have not wholly put off Humanity, there is a native compaſſion to a meek ſufferer. We have naturally ſome regret to ſee a Lamb under the knife; whereas the impatient roaring of a Swine diverts our pity; ſo that Patience in this caſe is as much the intereſt as duty of a Wiſe.

Of cauſleſs jealouſy towards the Wife, by the Husband.

7. But there is another inſtance wherein that vertue has a yet ſeverer trial, and that is when a Wife lies under the cauſleſs jealouſies of the husband, (I ſay cauſleſs, for if they be juſt 'tis not ſo much a ſeaſon for Patience, as for Repentance and Reformation.) This is ſure one of the greateſt Calamities that can befal a vertuous woman; who as ſhe accounts nothing ſo dear as her loyalty and honor, ſo thinks no infelicity can equal the aſperſing of thoſe, eſpecially when it is from him, to whom ſhe has bin the moſt ſolicitous to approve her ſelf. Yet God, who permits nothing but what he directs to ſome wiſe and gracious end, has an over-

ruling hand in this as well as in all other events of life; and therefore it becomes every woman in that condition, to examin ſtrictly what ſhe has done to provoke ſo ſevere a ſcourge. For tho' her heart condemn her not of any Falſeneſs to her husband, yet probably it may of many Diſloialties to her God; and then ſhe is humbly to accept even of this traducing of her Innocence, as the puniſhment of her iniquity, and bear it with the ſame temper wherewith *David* did the unjuſt revilings of *Shimei*, 2 *Kings* 16. 10. *Let him curſe, for the Lord hath bidden him.*

The comfort of a reſort to God's righteous judgment.

8. And when ſhe hath made this penitent reflection on her real guilts, ſhe may then with more courage encounter thoſe imaginary ones which are charged on her: wherein ſhe is to uſe all prudent and regular means for her juſtification, that being a debt ſhe ows to truth, and her own fame. But if after all, the ſuſpition remains ſtill fix'd (as commonly thoſe which are the moſt unreaſonable are the moſt obſtinate;) ſhe may ſtill ſolace her ſelf in her integrity, and God's approbation of it: nor ought ſhe to think her ſelf deſolate, that has her appeal open to heaven. Therefore whilſt ſhe can look both inward and upward with comfort, why ſhould ſhe chooſe to fix her eies only on the object of her grief? and whilſt her own complaint is of defamation, why ſhould ſhe ſo diſhonor God and a good Conſcience, as to ſhew any thing can be more forcible to oppreſs, than they are to relieve and ſupport? And if ſhe may not indulge to Grief, much leſs may ſhe to Anger, and Bitterneſs.

The torment of Jealouſy is a ſevere revenge on the injurious husband.

9. Indeed if ſhe conſider how painful a paſſion Jealouſy is, her husband will more need her pity; who tho' he be unjuſt to her, is yet cruel to himſelf. And as we do not uſe to hate and malign thoſe Lunatics, who in their fits beat their friends, and cut and gaſh themſelves, but rather make it our care to put all harmful engines out of their way; ſo ſhould the wife not deſpitefully ruminate upon the injury, but wiſely contrive to avert his temtations to more, by denying her ſelf even the moſt innocent liberties, if ſhe ſee they diſſatisfy him. I know there have bin ſome of another opinion; and as if they thought Jealouſy were to be cured by majoration, have in an angry contemt done things to inflame it, put on an unwonted freedom and jollity, to ſhew their husbands how little they had ſecured themſelves by their diſtruſt. But this as it is no Chriſtian, ſo I conceive it is no prudent expedient: it ſerves to ſtrengthen not only the husbands ſuſpition, but his party too, and make many others of his mind: and 'tis a little to be fear'd, that by uſing ſo to brave the Jealouſy, they may at laſt come to verify it. I have bin the longer on this theme, becauſe as Jealouſy is the moſt fatal peſt of a married life, ſo I think it more ordinarily occurs among people of Quality, and with the worſt and moſt durable effects. Yet whatever pretences people may take hence, the marriage vow is too faſt a knot to be looſned by fancies and Chimera's: let a woman therefore be the perſon ſuſpecting or ſuſpected, neither will abſolve her from that Love to her husband ſhe has ſworn to pay.

Of parting upon little diſguſts.

10. But alas what hope is there that theſe greater temtations ſhall be reſiſted, when we ſee every the ſlighteſt diſguſt is now adaies too ſtrong for the matrimonial Love. Nay indeed it do's of courſe fall off of it ſelf; which is an event ſo much expected, that 'tis no wonder to ſee it expire with the firſt circuit of the moon; but 'tis every bodies admiration to ſee it laſt one of the ſun. And ſomtimes it vaniſhes ſo clearly, as not to leave ſo much as a ſhadow behind it, not ſo much as the formalities of Marriage: one bed, one houſe cannot hold them, as if they had bin put

together like caſeſhot in a gun, only that they might the more forcibly ſcatter ſeveral waies. Nay as if this were deſign'd and intended in the firſt addreſſes unto Marriage, a ſeparate maintenance is of courſe aforehand contracted for, and becomes as ſolemn a part of the ſettlement, as a Jointure is. *Plutarch* obſerves of the ancient Romans, that for two hundred and thirty years after the founding of their State, there never was one example of any married couple that ſeparated: it is not likely they could have a more binding form of Marriage than ours is, the difference muſt lie between their Veracity and our Falſeneſs.

The miſchief of its being thought an unfaſhionable thing for a wife to be ſeen in her husbands company.

11. But even among thoſe who deſert not each other, too many do mutually fall from that entireneſs and affection which is the ſoul of Marriage; and to help on the declination, there are faſhionable Maxims taken up, to make men and their wives the greateſt ſtrangers to each other. Thus 'tis pronounc'd a piece of ill Breeding, a ſign of a country Gentleman, to ſee a man go abroad with his own wife (I ſuppoſe thoſe who brought up theſe rules are not to ſeek what uſe to make of them.) And were the time of moſt of the modiſh couples computed, 'twould be found they are but few of their waking hours (I might ſay minutes) together: ſo that if nothing elſe, meer deſuetude and intermiſſion of converſation muſt needs allay, if not quite extinguiſh their kindneſs. But I hope there are yet many who do not think the autority of a faſhion greater than that of a vow: and ſuch will ſtill think it their duty both to own and cheriſh that kindneſs and affection they have ſo ſolemnly promis'd.

The debt of fidelity of the wife to the husband.

12. Another debt to the perſon of a husband is Fidelity: for as ſhe has eſpous'd all his intereſts, ſo ſhe is oblig'd to be true to them, to keep all his ſecrets, to inform him of his dangers, yea and in a mild and gentle manner to admoniſh him of his faults. This is the moſt genuine act of friendſhip; therefore ſhe who is plac'd in the neareſt and moſt intimate degree of that relation, muſt not be wanting in it. She that lies in his boſom ſhould be a kind of ſecond Conſcience to him, by putting him in mind both of his duty and his aberration: and as long as ſhe can be but patiently heard, 'tis her ſin to omit it; 'tis the greateſt treachery to his nobleſt, to his immortal part, and ſuch as the moſt officious cares of his other intereſt can never expiate. Nay indeed ſhe is unfaithful to her ſelf in it, there being nothing that do's ſo much ſecure the happineſs of a Wife as the Vertue and Piety of the Husband. Yet, tho' this is to have her chiefeſt care, as being his principal intereſt, ſhe is to neglect none of the inferior, but contribute her utmoſt to his advantage in all his concerns.

Particularly to his bed.

13. Beyond all theſe the matrimonial fidelity has a ſpecial notion as it relates to the Bed; and in that the wife is to be moſt ſeverely ſcrupulous, and never to admit ſo much as a thought or imagination, much leſs any parly or treaty contrary to her loialty. 'Tis true wantonneſs is one of the fouleſt blots that can ſtain any of the Sex; but 'tis infinitly more odious in the married, it being in them an accumulation of crimes, perjury added to uncleanneſs, the infamy of their family ſuperſtructed upon their own. And accordingly all laws have made a difference in their puniſhments. Adultery was by God's own award puniſht with death among the Jews, *Lev.* 20.10. And it ſeems it was ſo agreeable to natural Juſtice, that divers other nations did the like; and I know no reaſon, but the difficulty of detection, that ſhould any where give it a milder ſentence. The ſon of *Sirach* has excellently deſcrib'd the ſeveral gradations of the

guilt, *Ecclus.* 23. 23. which I ſhall deſire the Reader to conſult: which whoſo do's muſt certainly wonder at the Alchymy of this age, that from ſuch a maſs of ſhame and infamy can extract matter of confidence: that thoſe who lie under ſo many brands and ſtigmas, are ſo far from hiding their faces, that none ſhew them with ſo much boldneſs, and the aſſurance of the guilty far exceeds that of the innocent. But impudence is a ſlender ſhelter for guilt, and ſerves rather to betray than hide: ſo that they are not able to outface the opinions of men, much leſs can they the judgments of God; who as he was ſolemnly invok'd as Witneſs to their Vow, ſo by his Omnipreſence is againſt their wills a Witneſs too of its violations.

The duty of Obedience.

14. Another Duty to the perſon of the Husband is Obedience, a word of a very harſh ſound in the ears of ſome Wives, but is certainly the duty of all: and that not only by their promiſe of it, tho' that were ſufficient; but from an original of much older date, it being the mulct that was laid upon the Womans diſobedience to God, that ſhe (and all deriv'd from her) ſhould be ſubject to the Husband; ſo that the contending for ſuperiority, is an attẽmt to reverſe that Fundamental Law, which is almoſt as ancient as the World. But ſurely God, with whom there is no ſhadow of change, will not make Acts of repeal to ſatisfie the petulancy of a few maſterleſs Women. That Statute will ſtill ſtand in force, and if it cannot aw them into an Obſervance, will not fail to conſign them to Puniſhment. And indeed this fault is commonly its own lictor, and do's anticipate (tho' not avert) its final doom. The imperiouſneſs of a Woman do's often raiſe thoſe Storms, wherein her ſelf is Shipwrack'd. How pleaſantly might many Women have liv'd, if they had not affected Dominion? Nay, how much of their Will might they have had, if they had not ſtrugled for it? For let a Man be of never ſo gentle a Temper (unleſs his Head be ſofter than his Heart) ſuch a Uſurpation will awake him to aſſert his Right. But if he be of a ſowre ſevere Nature, if he have as great a deſire of Rule as ſhe, back'd with a much better Title, what Tempeſts, what Hurricanes muſt two ſuch oppoſite Winds produce? And at laſt 'tis commonly the Wives lot, after an uncreditable unjuſt War, to make as diſadvantageous a Peace; this (like all other ineffective Rebellions) ſerving to ſtraiten her Yoke, to turn an ingenious Subjection into a ſlaviſh Servitude: ſo that certainly it is only not the Vertue, but the Wiſdom of Wives to do that upon Duty, which at laſt they muſt (with more unſupportable Circumſtances) do upon Neceſſity.

The duty of concern for the husbands reputation.

15. And as they ow theſe Severals to the perſon of the Husband, ſo there is alſo a debt to his Reputation. This they are to be extremely tender of, to advance it, by making all that is good in him as conſpicuous, as public as they can; ſetting his worth in the cleareſt light, but putting his infirmities in the Shade; caſting a veil upon thoſe to skreen them from the eies of others, nay (as far as is poſſible) from their own too; there being nothing acquir'd to the Wife by contemplating the Husbands weakneſs, but a temtation of deſpiſing him; which tho' bad enough in it ſelf, is yet rendred worſe by that train of miſchievous conſequences which uſually attend it. In caſe therefore of any notable Imperfections in him, her ſafeſt way will be to conſider them no farther than ſhe can be inſtrumental to the curing them; but to divert from thoſe, and reflect upon her own, which perhaps if impartially weighed, may ballance, if not overpoiſe his. And indeed thoſe Wives who are apt to blaze their Husbands Faults, do ſhew that they have either little adverted to their own, or

elſe find them ſo great, that they are forc'd to that Art of diverſion, and ſeek in his infamy to drown theirs. But that project is a little unlucky, for nothing do's in ſober Judges, create greater prejudice to a Woman, than to ſee her forward in impeaching her Husband.

This is beſt ſhewn in a care of doing nothing which may redound to the husbands diſhonor.

16. But beſides this immediate tenderneſs of his Reputation, there is another by way of reflection, which conſiſts in a care that ſhe her ſelf do nothing which may redound to his diſhonor. There is ſo ſtrict a Union between a Man and his Wife, that the Law counts them one perſon, and conſequently they can have no divided Intereſt, ſo that the misbehavior of the Woman reflects ignominiouſly on the Man; it therefore concerns them, as well upon their Husbands as their own account, to abſtain even from all appearance of evil, and provide that themſelves be (what *Cæſar* is ſaid to have requir'd of his Wife) not only without guilt, but without ſcandal alſo.

The duty of the wife to the husbands fortune.

17. Another part of the Wives Duty relates to her Husbands Fortune, the management whereof is not ordinarily the Wives Province, but where the Husband thinks fit to make it ſo, ſhe is oblig'd to adminiſter it with her beſt Care and Induſtry; not by any neglect of hers to give others opportunity of defrauding him: yet on the other ſide, not by an immoderate tenacity or griping, to bring upon him and her ſelf the reproach, and which is worſe, the Curſe that attends Exaction and Oppreſſion. But this is not uſually the Wives field of Action, tho' he that ſhall conſider the deſcription which *Solomon* gives of a vertuous Wife, *Prov* 31. will be apt to think her Province is not ſo narrow and confin'd, as the humor of the Age would repreſent it. He tells us, *That ſhe ſeeks wool and flax, and works diligently with her hands: that ſhe is like the merchants ſhips, and brings her food from far.* That *ſhe conſiders a field, and buys it, and with the fruit of her hands plants a vineyard, &c.* And leſt this ſhould be imagin'd to be the Character of a mean Country Dame, he adds, That *her houſhold is clothed in ſcarlet*, and that *her husband ſits among the elders of the land.* It were eaſie to give inſtances from Hiſtory, of the advantageous menage and active induſtry of Wives, not only in ſingle Perſons, but whole Nations. But nothing can be more pregnant, than that among the Romans: in the very height and flouriſh of the Empire, *Auguſtus* himſelf *ſcarce wore any thing but of the manufacture of his wife, his ſiſter, daughters, and neeces*, as *Suetonius* aſſures us. Should the gay *lilies of our fields, which neither ſow nor ſpin, nor gather into barns*, be exempted from furniſhing others, and left to cloth themſelves, 'tis to be doubted they would reverſe our Saviours Parallel of *Solomons glories*, and no beggar in all his rags *would be arraied like one of theſe, Luke* 12. 27.

Not to ſpend in the ambition of cloths, jewels, and furniture.

18. But we will be yet more kind, and impoſe only negative thrift on the Wife, not to waſte and embezle her Husbands Eſtate, but to confine her Expences within ſuch limits as that can eaſily admit; a Caution, which if all Women had obſerv'd, many noble families had bin preſerv'd, of which there now remains no other Memorial, but that they fell a Sacrifice to the profuſe Vanity of a Woman; and I fear, this Age is like to provide many more ſuch Monuments for the next. Our Ladies, as if they emulated the Roman Luxury (which *Seneca* and *Pliny* deſcribe with ſo much indignation) do ſometimes wear about them the Revenues of a rich Family; and thoſe that cannot reach to that, ſhew how much 'tis againſt their wills they fall lower, by the vaſt variety and exceſs of ſuch things they can poſſibly compaſs; ſo much extravagance not only in their own Dreſs, but that of their Houſes and Appartments, as if their

vanity, like the Leproſie we read of, *Lev.* 14. had infected the very Walls. And indeed, 'tis a very ſpreading fretting one, for the Furniture oft conſumes the Houſe, and the Houſe conſumes the Land: ſo that if ſome Gentlemen were to calculate their Eſtates, they might reduce all to the Inventory of *Scopias* the *Theſſalian*, who profeſt his All lay only in ſuch Toies as did him no good. Women are now skilful Chymiſts, and can quickly turn their Husbands Earth into Gold: but they purſue the Experiment too far, make that Gold too volatile, and let it all vapor away in inſignificant (tho' gaudy) Trifles.

The expence of the Town.

19. Nor is it ever like to be otherwiſe with thoſe that immoderately affect the Town, that forge of Vanity, which ſupplies a perpetual Spring of new temptations. 'Tis true, there are ſome Ladies who are neceſſarily engaged to be there: their Husbands Emploiments or Fortunes have mark'd that out as their proper ſtation, and where the ground of their ſtay is their duty, there is more reaſon to hope it will not betray them to ill, for temptations are moſt apt to aſſault ſtraglers, thoſe that put themſelves out of their proper road. And truly I ſee not who can more properly be ſaid to be ſo, than thoſe Women whoſe means of ſubſiſtence lies in the Country, and yet will ſpend it no where but at *London*, which ſeems to carry ſomthing of oppoſition to God's Providence, who ſurely never caus'd their lot to fall, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *in a fair ground, in goodly heritages*, *Pſal.* 16. with an intent they ſhould never inhabit them. The twelve Tribes of *Iſrael* had their peculiar Portions in *Canaan* aſſign'd them by lot, *Joſh.* 14. 2. and every one acquieſced in his part, dwelt in his own Inheritance: had they bin impatient of living any where but in the Matropolis, had they all crouded to *Jeruſalem*, all the reſt of the Land would have bin as deſolate before the Captivity as it was after, none would have bin left but ſuch as *Nabuzaradan* permitted to ſtay, *Jer.* 52. 16. *ſome of the poor to dreſs the Vines, and to till the ground.* And truly, the ſame is like to be the fate of this Nation, if this humor goes on as it has begun; which may in time prove as miſchievous to the public, as it daily is to private Families.

The obligations of the Gentry to the Country.

20. But beſides this 'tis yet farther to be conſider'd, that where God gives an eſtate, he as the ſupreme Landlord affixes ſomthing of duty, laies a kind of rent charge upon it, expects it ſhould maintain both hoſpitality and charity; and ſure both theſe are fitteſt to be done upon the place whence the ability of them riſes. All public taxes uſe to be levyed where the eſtate lies, and I know not why theſe which are God's aſſeſments upon it, ſhould not be paid there too. When a Gentleman's land becomes profitable unto him by the ſweat and labor of his poor neighbors and tenants; 'twill be a kind of *muzling the ox*, 1 *Cor.* 9. 9. if they never taſt of the fruit of their pains, if they ſhall never have the refreſhment of a good meal, or an alms; which they are not very like to meet with, if all the profits be ſent up to maintain an equipage, and keep up a parade in Town. But alas 'tis often not only the annual profits that go that way, not only the crop, but the ſoil too; thoſe luxuries uſually prey upon the vitals, eat out the very heart of an eſtate, and many have ſtay'd in the Town 'till they have nothing left in the Country to retire to.

The ruin of the family and poſterity ow'd to the deſerting the Country.

21. Now where this proceeds from the Wife, what account can ſhe give to her Husband, whoſe eaſineſs and indulgence (for that muſt be ſuppos'd in the caſe) ſhe has ſo abus'd? as alſo to her poſterity and family, who for her pride muſt be brought low, reduc'd to a condition beneath their quality, becauſe ſhe affected to live above? But ſhe will yet worſe an-

ſwer it to her ſelf, on whom ſhe has brought not only the inconvenience but the guilt. 'Tis ſure a lofty mind will feel ſmart enough of a fall, a diminution, much more an indigence will be ſufficiently grievous to a vain and laviſh humor; yet here it will farther have an additional ſting from the conſcience, that ſhe ow's it only to her own pride and folly, a moſt imbittering conſideration, and ſuch as advances the affliction beyond that of a more innocent poverty, as much as the pain of an envenom'd arrow exceeds that of another.

The wives impoveriſhing her huſband a manifold robbery.

22. But the ſaddeſt reckoning of all is that which ſhe is to make to God, who has declar'd he hates robbery tho' for a burnt-offering to himſelf. How will he then deteſt this robbery, this impoveriſhing of the husband, when 'tis only to make an oblation to vanity and exceſs? It ſhould therefore be the care of all Wives to keep themſelves from a guilt for which God and man, yea and themſelves alſo ſhall equally accuſe them, and to keep their expences within ſuch limits, that as bees ſuck but do not violate or deface the flowers, ſo they as joint proprietaries with the husbands, may enjoy but not devour and deſtroy his fortune.

The duties to be perform'd to the huſband, muſt be paid to the bad as well as good.

23. I have now run thro' the duties to be perform'd unto the Husband, wherein I have not uſed the exactneſs of a Caſuiſt in curiouſly anatomizing every part, and ſhewing all the moſt minute particulars reducible to each head. I have only drawn out the greater lines, and inſiſted on thoſe wherein Wives are moſt frequently deficient. I ſhall only add this caution, that whatever is duty to the husband, is equally ſo, be he good or ill. The Apoſtle commands ſubjection and fidelity, even to Heathen Huſbands 1 *Pet.* 3. 12, and 'tis not now their defect either in Piety or Morality, that can abſolve the Wiſe. For, beſides the inconvenience of making her duty precarious and liable to be ſubſtracted upon every pretence of demerit, ſhe has by ſolemn Contract renounc'd that liberty, and in her Marriage-vow taken him for better for worſe; and it is too late *after Vows to make enquiry, Prov.* 20. 25. to ſeek to break looſe from that Bond of her Soul; and how uneaſy ſoever the perverſneſs of the Husband may render it, he cannot thereby make it leſs, but more rewardable by God. For what the Apoſtle ſpeaks in the caſe of Servants, is no leſs appliable to this, 1 *Pet.* 2. 19. *for this is thank worthy, if for conſcience towards God ye endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully.* Whatever duty is perform'd to Man with aſpect on God, he owns as to himſelf; ſo that how unworthy ſoever the Husband may be, the Wife cannot miſplace her obſervance, whilſt ſhe finally terminates it on that infinit Goodneſs and Majeſty to whom no love or obedience can be enough.

The duty of a wife as a mother.

24. From this relation of a Wife, there ordinarily ſprings another, that of a Mother, to which there belongs a diſtinct duty, which may be branched into many ſeverals: but I ſhall at preſent only reduce them to two Heads, Love and Care. A Mother is a title of ſo much Tenderneſs, that we find it borrow'd by our common Dialect to expreſs the moſt exuberant Kindneſs; nay, even in Sacred Stile it has the ſame uſe, and is often ſet as the higheſt Example our weakneſs can comprehend of the Divine Compaſſions. So that Nature ſeems ſufficiently to have ſecur'd the love of Mothers to their Children, without the aid of any poſitive Law. Yet we find this, (as other inſtincts of Nature) is ſometimes violated, and oftner perverted and applied to miſtaken purpoſes: the firſt is by a defect of Love; the other by an imprudent exceſs of it: the defect do's, I preſume, more rarely occur than the other; yet it doth ſomtimes happen, and that either from a moroſe ſowerneſs of humor, or elſe

from too vehement an intention on ſomthing elſe.

25. Some Women have ſuch a ruggedneſs of Nature, that they can love nothing; the ugly Paſſions of Anger and Envy have, like *Pharaoh's* lean Kine, eat up the more amiable of Love and Joy. *Plato* was wont to adviſe crabbed auſtere Tempers, to Sacrifice to the *Graces*; and ſuch as theſe had need have a great deal of Chriſtian Philoſophy, to allay and ſweeten their native Bitterneſs. But there are others that are not void of the affection of Love, but 'tis foreſtall'd by ſome other Object, and ſo diverted from their Children. And 'tis a little to be doubted, thoſe Objects which ſo divert are none of the beſt, for the Wiſdom of God has diſpos'd all duty into ſuch a Harmony and Conſent of Parts, that one interferes not with another. If we love no prohibited thing, all the regular Objects of our kindneſs will agree well enough, and one need never ſupplant another. And indeed 'tis oft obſervable, that thoſe Women who immoderatly love their own Pleaſures, do leaſt regard their Children; they look on them as Clogs to keep them within doors, and think their adverting to them, will hinder their free range abroad; thoſe are turn'd off to the care of a Nurſe or Maid, whilſt perhaps a Dog or a Monkey is thought worthy their own attendance.

Who had rather have a dog in their lap, than a Child.

26. *Plutarch* relates it as a Sarcaſm of *Ceſars* to ſome Foreigners whom he ſaw (at *Rome*) ſtrangely fond of ſuch little Animals, that he ask'd them, Whether the Women in their Country had no Children; thereby intimating, how unreaſonable it was for thoſe that had, to beſtow their Careſſes on ſuch Creatures. And ſurely he would not have given a milder Reprimand to ſome of our Ladies, who not only pleaſe, but pride themſelves in thoſe little Brutes, ſhew them to all Comers, when perhaps you may converſe with them divers daies, before you ſhall by any mention of theirs, know that they have a Child.

The fault of not nurſing Children.

27. To this defect of Love, many are apt to impute the Mothers tranſferring the Nurſing her Child to another. I am not forward to pronounce of it, being loth to involve ſo many as I then muſt in the imputation of unnaturalneſs; I rather think it is taken up as a piece of State and Greatneſs; for no other motive, but what is founded in their Quality, could ſo univerſally prevail with all that are of it. But ſure this is one of the vain Punctillio's wherewith this Age abounds. For whatever rank the Mother is of, the Child carries proportion to it, and there is the ſame equality between the greateſt Lady and her own Child, as is between the meaneſt Beggar and hers: tho' indeed if there were any condeſcenſion in it, the averſions of that ought not to outweigh the impulſes of Nature, and the many advantages the Child may receive by taking its Nouriſhment whence it deriv'd its Subſtance. And therefore, tho' I will not be too poſitive in aſſerting the neceſſity, yet I confeſs, I cannot but look with reverence upon thoſe few perſons of Honor, who have broke thro' an unreaſonable Cuſtom, and preferr'd the good of their Children before that fantaſtic priviledg of Greatneſs. And ſuch muſt in all Juſtice be acknowledg'd to have given a much better evidence of their love to their Children, than the others.

A fault noted by heathen writers

28. There is in *A. Gellius*, in his fourteenth Book, ſo fine a Diſcourſe on this ſubject, where *Favorinus* the Philoſopher is introduced, perſwading a Noble Lady, notwithſtanding the uſual Excuſes, to nurſe her Child; that nothing beſides the length, could temt me to omit the tranſcribing it: unleſs happily the little ſucceſs, which a Noble Perſon of the ſame Sex here concern'd, I mean the Counteſs of *Lincoln*, in the Ingenious Book

wrote by her, and call'd her Nurſery, be a ſufficient ground of deſpairing to convince by any thing that can be ſaid. However, let theſe delicate ones conſider the ſevere words of the Prophet, *Lament.* 4. 3. *The ſea-monſters draw out the breaſt, they give ſuck to their young ones: the daughter of my people is become cruel like the oſtrich in the Wilderneſs, who is hardned againſt her young ones, as tho' they were not hers: her labor is in vain without fear, becauſe God hath deprived her of wiſdom, neither hath he imparted to her underſtanding*, Job. 39. 16, 17.

There may be a fault alſo in exceſs of love.

29. But as there may be a fault in the defect, ſo there may be alſo in the exceſs of Love. God is the only unlimited object of our Love, towards all others 'tis eaſy to become inordinate, and in no inſtance more than in this of Children. The love of a Parent is deſcending, and all things move moſt violently downwards: ſo that whereas that of children to their Parents commonly needs a ſpur, this of the Parent often needs a bridle, eſpecially that of the Mother which (by ſtrength of feminine paſſion) do's uſually exceed the love of the Father. Now to regulate this affection, ſhe is to advert to theſe two rules, firſt that ſhe hurt not her ſelf by it, and ſecondly that ſhe hurt not her children. Of the firſt ſhe is in danger if ſhe ſuffer that Human affection to ſwell beyond its banks, ſo as to come in any competition with the Divine. This is to make an Idol of her child, for every thing is ſo to us, which rivals the love of God in our hearts, and he who owns the title of a Jealous God, may be provok'd as well by the bowing our ſouls to a living image, as the proſtration of our bodies to a dead. Accordingly we oft ſee the effects of his Jealouſy in this particular. The doting affection of the Mother, is frequently puniſh'd with the untimely death of the Children; or if not with that, 'tis many times with a ſeverer ſcourge: they live (but as it was foretold to *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 2. 33.) *to grieve her eyes, and to conſume her heart*, to be ruinous to themſelves, and afflictions to their friends, and to force their unhappy mothers to that ſad acclamation *Luke* 23. 29. *Bleſſed are the wombs which bare not.*

Which if not extended to all, is partial to ſome.

30. And as this proves often true, when the dotage is general upon all the Children, ſo do's it oftner when 'tis more partial and fix'd upon any one: that Darling which ſhe makes the only object of her Joy, uſually becomes that of her Sorrow. It is an ordinary infirmity in Parents, to heap all their kindneſs upon one to the defrauding of the reſt, and too many times upon very undue motives: a little excelling in point of Beauty turns the ſcales, when perhaps many more ſolid Excellencies are the counterpoiſe. And ſurely this is not only unjuſt but irrational in the Parent: for all peculiarity of favor in a Superior ſhould be diſpenc'd either by way of Reward, or Encouragement; and neither of thoſe ends can take place, where 'tis only the outward form that is conſider'd. For that cannot be rewardable, to which the party has contributed nothing; and the *Pſalmiſt* will tell us, That *'tis God that has made us, and not we our ſelves*, *Pſalm* 100. 2. And as little room is there for the other end, that of encouragement. For as our Savior tells us, *Matth.* 6. none can add a cubit to his ſtature, nor make one hair white or black: 'tis certain themſelves cannot really do either, tho' by the aid of Artificial Hypocriſie they frequently appear to do both. But thoſe are Arts which neither deſerve nor want encouragement: the natural Beauty muſt have its increaſe from the ſame ſource whence it deriv'd its being. There is therefore no reaſonable account to be given, why a Child ſhould be preferr'd for any ſuch exterior excellency.

§ K 2 31.

The only juſtifiable ground of partiality is their vertue.

31. The only juſtifiable ground of partiality to Children is their Vertue, for to that their own choice concurs, and ſo may intitle them to reward; and 'tis alſo in their power to advance; and ſo encouragements are not caſt away upon them. Nay, the influences of thoſe may extend farther, and provoke a vertuous emulation in the reſt. But then the mother muſt ſo manage it, as to evidence that 'tis no inequality in her own inclination, but merely the force of the others deſert; not the Perſon, but the Goodneſs that biaſſes her: and when Vertue is known to be the only ingratiating Quality, they will at once learn the way to become hers and God's Favorites. And unleſs it be upon this one deſign, 'tis a very unſafe thing for a Parent to make any partial diſcrimination among Children, which is ſure to temt the more neglected, both to repine at her, and envy her Darlings. And oftentimes ſuch ſeeds of rancor have bin by that means ſowed in Children, as have bin hard to eradicate in their riper Years. Nor is the miſchief leſs which ſhe do's to her Fondlings, who beſides that they are expos'd to the malice of the reſt, are uſually ſpoil'd by it, made inſolent and untractable, perhaps their whole lives after: for where the Mothers affection is unbridled, commonly the Childs will is ſo too, her fondneſs ſuperſeding that diſcipline and correction, which ſhould, as the Wiſe Man ſpeaks, *bow down its neck from its youth.*

General indulgence is worſe than partial.

32. And the like may be ſaid where the indulgence is more univerſal to all the Children; which is in one reſpect worſe than the partial, becauſe it ſpoils more, not one or two, but all the brood. The doting love of a Mother blinds her eies, that ſhe cannot ſee their faults; manacles her hands, that ſhe cannot chaſtiſe them, and ſo their Vices are permitted to grow up with themſelves. As their Joints knit and gather ſtrength, ſo do their ill habits, till at laſt they are confirm'd into an Obſtinacy; ſo ſetting them in a perfect oppoſition to that Pattern they ſhould imitate: for as Chriſt's childhood *increaſt in wiſdom*, and the Divine Favor, *Luke* 2. ſo do theirs in all thoſe provoking follies, which may avert both the love of God and Man. And alas what recompence can the little blandiſhments and careſſes of a Mother make her Children, for ſuch important, ſuch ineſtimable miſchiefs? So that ſhe that will be really kind, muſt temper her Indulgence with a prudent ſeverity, or elſe ſhe eminently violates the ſecond rule, by which ſhe ſhould regulate her love, and do's that to her Children, which *Jacob* fear'd from his Father, *Gen.* 27. *Brings a curſe upon them and not a bleſſing.*

Of the Mothers care of Children.

33. Indeed the beſt way of approving their Love, is by well diſcharging the other Branch of their duty, that of Care. Without this, all the moſt paſſionate raptures of Kindneſs are but an airy Apparition, a fantaſtic Scene, and will no more advantage a Child, than the whole Shambles in Picture can feed and nouriſh it. Now this care is not a temporary, momentary Duty, for ſome one critical inſtant; but is to attend the Child thro' the ſeveral ſtages of its Minority, *viz.* Infancy, Childhood, and Youth. The very firſt part of their Infancy, is a ſeaſon only for thoſe Cares which concern their Bodies, providing for their careful Attendance, and all other things conducing to the ſtrengthning their Conſtitutions, and laying a foundation for future Health and Vigor. Which is their intereſt not only upon a Bodily, but upon an Intellectual account, the good temperature of the Body being a great aid towards the free operations of the Mind. And therefore *Socrates*, and other Philoſophers, much recommend to their Diſciples the care of Health, as that which frees the Soul from many incumbrances in its purſuit of Knowledg: and it

was the comprehenſive Praier of the Poet, *That the Gods would grant a ſound Mind in a healthful Body.*

The inuring them to moderate hardſhips.

34. But this Health is not alwaies the conſequent of a very nice and tender Breeding, but is very oft overthrown by it; and if Ladies could but find in their hearts to try it, they would, I doubt not, find, that the inuring them to moderate Hardſhips, would much more conduce to the eſtabliſhing and fortifying their Conſtitutions.

Of early inſtitution.

35. Beyond all this, the care for their Exterior is ſoon overtaken by a more important one, that of their Interior, in the timing of which there ſeems to be a very common miſtake in the World. We look upon the ſeven Years of Infancy, as the life merely of an Animal, to be ſpent only in the entertainments of Senſe: and as we uſe not to yoak Calves, or back young Colts, ſo we think our Children are for a while to be left at the ſame liberty, to have no reſtraint put on any of their Paſſions. Nay many times we excite and foment them, teach Children to be angry and envious, proud and ſullen, as if we fear'd their Natural Propenſions to all theſe were too faint, and wanted the help of Inſtitutions. But ſurely this is a great and pernicious Error, and this ſuppoſing Children to be ſo long Brutes, is the way to make them ſo longer. The Patrons of Atheiſm make it a moſt conſtant Topic in the diſparagement of Religion, that 'tis ow'd to the prejudices infuſed in the firſt Infancy: 'twere to be wiſht, that this Objection might ſo far be complied with, that the fear of God, the love of Vertue, and hatred of Vice, might have the firſt poſſeſſion of the Soul; and they be made to moderate their Paſſions, as ſoon as they are in a capacity to have them excited and engag'd.

The diſcipline of puniſhment is ſafer than that of terror.

36. And truly, if we will obſerve it, we may ſee very early dawnings of reaſon in Infants, which would ſooner come to a brightneſs, if we would betimes ſet to the ſcattering of thoſe Paſſions which eclipſe and darken it. A Child will quickly be taught to know what pleaſes or diſpleaſes a Parent, and by a very little taſte of reward or Puniſhment will learn to do the one, and avoid the other: and when this is don, the Parent has gain'd the fundamental Point, *That of obedience*, and may ſuperſtruct on it what ſhe pleaſes, and then 'tis her fault if the Child be not by eaſy and inſenſible degrees moulded into a right form. 'Tis at firſt all one to the Child, whether he name God in an Oath or in his Praiers; but a Mother by Puniſhing the one, and Rewarding the other, will quickly bring him to know there is a difference, and ſo proportionably in other Inſtances. As to the way of Diſcipline, it may not be amiſs to obſerve, That when there is occaſion for Severity, 'tis better to aw by actual Puniſhment than Terror, and never to make uſe of Infinit and Inviſible Affrightments, the beloved methods of Nurſes and Servants, ſuch as are the menacing of Sprights and Mormo's, and leaving in the dark, that frequently make daſtardly and timerous Impreſſions, which a long Age ſcarcely wears off.

Stubborneſs broken in infancy, will be the eaſier ſubdued in childhood.

37. A ſober ſenſe of things, is to be impreſſed by treatable means, and this will be done with moſt eaſe, both to the Parent and Child, the ſooner 'tis ſet upon. The will of a tender Infant, is like its Limbs, ſupple and pliant, but time confirms it, and cuſtom hardens it: ſo that 'tis a cruel Indulgence to the poor Creature, to let it contract ſuch Habits, which muſt coſt him ſo dear the breaking, or dearer if never broken. And if this early care be taken of the Infancy, 'twill much eaſe the next part, that of the Childhood; for where the Iron ſinew in the neck is broken, where the native Stubborneſs is ſubdued ſo early, the Yoke will ſit eaſie, all ſucceeding

ceeding parts of Diſcipline will come with more facility and profit. The care proper to this Age, is the inſtructing in all parts of uſeful Knowledg, of which as the Divine, for the excellency both of its nature and its end, muſt be firſt ranked, ſo ſhould it be firſt and moſt induſtriouſly cultivated, and by all endearing methods impreſt, not only on the Underſtanding, but the Heart. Piety and Vertue ſhould be propos'd to Children as the moſt amiable, as well as neceſſary things, and they ſhould be invited not only to know, but love them.

The care of teaching not to be put off to Servants and Governeſſes.

38. This part of Learning is equally competent to both Sexes, and therefore when the Sons are remov'd from under their Mothers tuition, and ſent to more public places of Erudition, her Province is ſtill the ſame as to her Daughters, to whom ſhe ſhould not only Preach, but exemplify it in her own Practice, no Precepts penetrating ſo much into Youth, as thoſe that are ſo inforc'd. And in order to this, I ſhould commend to Mothers, the being as much with them as they can, and taking the perſonal Inſpection of them; not to turn them off wholly to Servants, no nor yet Governeſſes, but frequently themſelves to examin how they proceed in the Speculative part of Knowledg, and no leſs frequently exhort them to the Practic.

Beſides care there is prudence requiſit in inſtitution.

39. *Marcus Cato* would not let his Son learn of his Slave, as diſdaining a Child ſhould ow ſo conſiderable a benefit to ſo ſervile a Perſon; and if he thought the mere teaching of Grammar too great a charge for ſuch a one, ſurely the whole Inſtitution of Youth is a much greater, it being that on which, not only a few outward Accompliſhments, but even their Eternity depends. The great *Cornelia*, Mother of the *Gracchi*, and *Aurelia* the Mother of *Auguſtus*, thought it worth their pains to be Governeſſes. And the truth is, the Soul of a Child is a little too precious a Truſt to commit wholly to the diligence and care of a mercenary Servant. Or if they happen not to want thoſe Qualifications, yet 'tis very poſſible they may Prudence, of which there is no ſmall degree requiſit to the Inſtructing of Youth, too great a remiſneſs or ſeverity being equally deſtructive in that Affair. And indeed, beſides theſe immediat, there are ſome other collateral Benefits conſequent to the Mothers performing that Office: 'twill bring her and her Children into an Intimacy and Converſation, give her an acquaintance with their ſeveral Capacities and Humors; for want of which, many Parents have err'd in their Conduct, one ſort of Treatment being not fit for all Children, and the diſtinguiſhing that depending wholly on their diſcerning their particular Tempers, which cannot well be done without ſome converſe with them.

If Children be permitted to trifle away their time, they will alſo their innocence.

40. Beſides, by this they will be witneſſes how they diſpoſe their Time, that they neither looſe it by doing nothing, nor yet miſemploy it by doing ill. And indeed there is ſcarce any part of the Parents care more important than this, Idleneſs being no farther remov'd from Vice, than a Cauſe is from its immediat Effect. Therefore if Children be permitted to trifle away their Time, they will ſoon learn to trifle away their Innocence alſo. So that 'tis highly neceſſary that they be provided of a ſucceſſion of Emploiments, that by the variety they may be inſenſibly drawn on. Nay methinks, it might very well be contriv'd that their Recreations might ſomtimes conſiſt of ſuch ingenuous Exerciſes, that they may at once both play and learn.

Children by being with the Mother are reſcued from the Society of Servants.

41. There is yet another good effect of the Mothers preſence with the Children (which is perhaps no leſs material than any of the former:) 'tis, that by this aſſociating them with her ſelf; ſhe prevents the danger of

worſe Society. Children, if the Parents allow them not their company, are neceſſarily caſt upon that of Servants, than which there is ſcarce a greater danger that attends Youth. For beſides, that low ſort of converſe debaſes their Minds, makes them mean and ſordid, it often corrupts their Manners too; Children uſually not receiving more peſtilent Infuſions from any than ſuch. Servants that deſire to ingratiate themſelves, and have no laudable quality whereby to do it, muſt firſt endeavor to ingratiate Vice to them, and then by their officious miniſteries in that, have a ready way of introducing themſelves into favor. Perhaps this will be thought to concern only the Maſculine part of Children, and that the Female, who are commonly in a diſtinct Apartment, and converſe only with their own Sex, are more ſecure. But I would not adviſe Mothers to depend too much on that, for they are no ſurer that their Daughters ſhall not converſe with Men, nay Men of the meaner ſort too, than that their Maids and attendants ſhall not do ſo. And when 'tis conſider'd, how apt thoſe are to entertain, if not to invite Amours, 'tis not very probable the Rooms where they quarter ſhall be inacceſſible to thoſe they affect. And it were much ſafer for Children to be in the moſt public concourſe of Men, than to be witneſſes and obſervers of the private Intrigues of ſuch Lovers. The memories of Youth are very tenacious, and if they once be tainted with any indecent thing, will be apt to recollect it, 'till at laſt perhaps they come to tranſcribe it. 'Tis therefore in this reſpect a very uſeful part of the Mothers care, to make her ſelf company to her Daughters, to prevent the dangers of a more unequal and infectious Converſe.

Such freedom to be allowed by Mothers that Children may not ſhun their Company.

42. But if this be uſeful in Childhood, 'tis no leſs than neceſſary in the next Period of their time, when they arrive near the growth and age of Women. Then indeed the Mother ſhould not only make them her Companions, but her Friends, allow them ſuch a kind, yet modeſt Freedom, that they may have a complacence in her Company, and not be temted to ſeek it among their Inferiors. That the belief of their kindneſs may ſupplant the pretenſions of thoſe meaner Sycophants, who by little flatteries endeavor to ſcrew themſelves into their good opinion, and become their Confidents: than which there is nothing more miſchievous, thoſe private Cabals that are held with ſuch, ſerving only to render them mutinous againſt their Parents; theſe Family Incendiaries, like thoſe in the State and Church, ſtill inculcating the one grand Principle of Liberty, a word ſo charming to our deprav'd Nature, and eſpecially to Youth, that they ſhould not be truſted with ſuch Lectures. Beſides thoſe intimacies are often Introductions to worſe; many ſcandalous Amours and unequal Matches having had their riſe from them. It ſhould therefore be the buſineſs of Mothers to prevent all ſuch pernicious Leagues, by preingaging them in more ſafe Familiarities, either with her ſelf, or ſome other, of whoſe Vertue ſhe has reaſon to be confident.

The beſt ſecurity for Children is the fixing a true ſenſe of Religion.

43. But the infallible Security againſt all this and all other Miſchiefs, is the bringing them into an intimacy and converſation with their Maker, by fixing a true ſenſe of Religion in their Hearts; if that can be effectually done, 'twill ſuperſede all other Expedients. She that duly conſiders ſhe is always in God's preſence, will want no other Inſpector, nor will ſhe much need Monitors, who attends to the advices of her own Conſcience. Neither will it only tend to the ſecuring her Innocence, but her Reputation too; it being one part of the Chriſtian Law, *to abſtain from all appearance of evil*, 1 *Theſ.* 2. 2. *to do things that are of good report*, *Phil.* 4. 8.

ſo that Piety is the one compleat armor to defend both their Vertue and Fame. And 'tis extremely neceſſary they ſhould be furniſht with it, at this Age eſpecially, when they do at firſt enter into the World; which we may well look on as a taking the Field, conſidering how many Aſſaults they are there like to meet with; and if they go without this Armature, they may, none knows how ſoon, be incurably wounded: of which there want not many ſad Inſtances, ſome whereof might probably have bin prevented, had the Parent taken care to have better fortified them.

'Tis a perverſe care to be ſolicitous for little outward accompliſhments, when Chriſtian are neglected.

44. And indeed 'tis not a little ſad to ſee how much this their moſt important Concern is neglected. Many Mothers, who are nicely curious in other parts of their Daughters breeding, are utterly inconſiderate in this. They muſt have all civil Accompliſhments, but no Chriſtian. Thoſe are excluded out of the ſcheme of Education, and by that means lie under the prejudice of being not only unneceſſary, but ungentile, below the regard of Perſons of Quality. 'Tis much to be fear'd, that this neglect toward their Children, is founded in a previous contemt of Piety in themſelves; yet I ſuppoſe 'tis often increas'd by a little vanity they have of ſeeing them excel in ſome of thoſe exterior Qualities, which may recommend them to the humor of the World, upon the improving whereof they are ſo intent, that more material things are overlookt. And when thoſe are acquir'd, the pride of ſhewing them betraies them to other Inconveniences. The Mother oft not only permits, but incites the Daughter to the opportunities of boaſting her Excellencies, ſends her ſo oft abroad on that Deſign, that at laſt perhaps ſhe cannot, when ſhe would, keep her at home, as I believe too many have found experimentally true. In a word, this Interval between Childhood and Majority, is the moſt critical Point of a Womans Life, and therefore ſhould be the moſt nicely and warily attended; and a Mother had need ſummon not only all her care and diligence, but her prudence too, well to diſcharge this part of her Obligation.

The cruelty of Parents impoſition on their Children in Marriage.

45. I ſhall not inſiſt more minutely upon Particulars: I have in the former Section ſpoken ſomwhat of what 'tis fit theſe young Virgins ſhould do and avoid; and whatever by that, or by any more exact rule appears their intereſt or duty, 'tis the Mothers to ſee it be not neglected by them: but where Kindneſs alone will not prevail, to employ their Autority too, and by a diſcreet mixture of each, ſecure their obſervance by both the tenures of Love and Reverence. Yet I ſhall a little reflect upon one Particular I mention'd before, I mean that of Marrying where they have averſion; which tho' I there charg'd as the Crime of the Daughter, yet I muſt here ſay the original and more inexcuſable guilt is uſually in the Parents, who are ſomtimes ſuch Idolaters to Wealth and Honor, that they Sacrifice their Children to them; a more barbarous Immolation than that to *Moloch*. For tho' that were very inhuman, yet it had this alleviation, that the pain was ſhort: but a loathed Bed is at once an acute and a lingring torment, nay, not only ſo, but a temtation too; ſo that 'tis a Tyranny of a moſt unlimited kind, extends its Effects even to Eternity: and ſure that Mother muſt have very petrified Bowels, have loſt all Natural Compaſſion, that can ſo impoſe on her Child.

Parents that have ill Children ſhould conſider how they have bin acceſſaries.

46. I ſhall add no more concerning this relation of a Mother, but only one ſhort Advice, That thoſe who groan under the fruſtration of their hopes, whoſe Children by any ſcandalous misbehavior become the Objects of their ſhame and grief, would ſoberly conſider, whether it have

not bin ſome way owing to themſelves, either by neglect in their Education, or by their own ill Example. 'Tis uſually one, and ſometimes both. They that upon recollection can aſſure themſelves 'tis neither, may bear the Affliction with much the greater cheerfulneſs; but they that cannot, I am ſure ought to bear it with much the more Patience and Submiſſion, take it as God's Lecture of Repentance, and look on their Childrens faults as the produc[illegible]f their own. And becauſe Satisfaction is an indiſpenſible part of Repentance, they are with their utmoſt induſtry to endeavor the repairing thoſe Ruins they have made, by recalling thoſe to Vertue, who by their means have ſtraied from it. 'Tis true, the errors of Education, like a ſubtil Poiſon, do ſo mix with the Blood, ſo incorporate into the Humors and Manners, that 'twill be very difficult to allay their Effects; and therefore the leſs they are themſelves able to do towards it, the more earneſtly they muſt importune a higher Power. He who divided the Light from the Darkneſs, can ſeparate the Effects from the Cauſes; and as he reſtrain'd the natural property of Fire, in the caſe of the three Children, *Dan.* 3. ſo He only can reſcue their Children from that deſtruction to which their negligence has expos'd them. But as to the influence their Example has had, they may do ſomthing towards the redreſs of that; by ſetting them a new Copy, making their own change ſo viſible, ſo remarkable, that they may have the very ſame means of reclaiming, which there was of ſeducing them. And this is a piece of Juſtice which ſeems to call aloud upon many Mothers. The irregularities of Youth could hardly have grown to the preſent height, had they not receiv'd warmth and ſhelter from the practice of their Elders, which do's at once give encouragement and take off reſtraints, the Mother looſing not only her Autority, but her confidence to admoniſh or reprove. With what face can ſhe require that ſtrict and ſevere modeſty of a young Girl, which ſhe who ſhould be a Matron will not practice? or tie up the giddy wandring humor of Youth, within thoſe bounds ſhe thinks too ſtrait for her own? and how ready a retortion will even Scripture it ſelf afford for ſuch an Impoſer? *Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thy ſelf? Rom.* 2. 21. Let it therefore be the care of all Mothers to live a perpetual Lecture to their Children, ſo to exemplifie to them all Vertue and Piety, that they may contribute ſomthing to their Spiritual, as well as their Natural Life; that however they may at leaſt deliver their own Souls, and not have their Childrens guilt recoil upon them as the unhappy originals of it.

The duty of a Wife as a Miſtreſs.

47. The laſt relation of a Married Woman is that of a Miſtreſs, the inſpection of the Family being uſually her Province; and tho' ſhe be not Supreme there, yet ſhe is to improve her delegated Autority to the advantage of all under it. And her more conſtant reſidence gives her more opportunities of it, than the frequent avocations of the Husband will perhaps allow him. St. *Paul* ſets it as the Calling, and indiſpenſible duty of the Married Woman, *That they guide the houſe*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 18. not thinking it a point of Greatneſs to remit the menage of all Domeſtic Concerns to a mercenary Houſe-keeper. And indeed, ſince it has bin a faſhionable thing for the Maſter to reſign up his concerns to the Steward, and the Lady hers to the Governante, it has gon ill with moſt great Families; whilſt theſe Officers ſerve themſelves inſtead of thoſe who employ them, raiſe Fortunes on their Patrons ruins, and divide the ſpoil of the Family; the Houſe-keeper pilfering within doors, and the Bailiff plundering without.

The beſt way to be well ſerv'd, is to ſee that God be ſo.

48. Now to the well-guiding of the Houſe by the Miſtreſs of it, I know no better or more comprehenſive rule, than for her to endeavor to make all that are hers, to be God's Servants alſo. This will ſecure her of all thoſe intermedial Qualifications in them, in which her ſecular Intereſt is concern'd, their own Conſciences being the beſt ſpy ſhe can ſet upon them as to their Truth and Fidelity, and the beſt ſpur alſo to diligence and Induſtry. But to the making them ſuch, there will nee[illegible]rſt Inſtruction, and ſecondly Diſcipline. It is a neceſſary part of the Rulers care to provide that none in their Family ſhould want means of neceſſary Inſtruction. I do not ſay that the Miſtreſs ſhould ſet up for a Catechiſt or Preacher; but that they take order they ſhould be taught by thoſe that are qualified for the emploiment. And that their furniſhing them with Knowledg, may not ſerve only to help them to a greater number of ſtripes, *Luke* 12. 47. they are to give them the opportunities of conſecrating it by Praier and Devotion, to that end to have public Divine Offices in the Family; and that not by ſtarts or accidents (when a devouter Gueſt is to be entertain'd, and laid by when a profane) but daily and regularly, that the hours of Praiers may be fix'd and conſtant as thoſe of Meals, and (if it may poſſibly be) as much frequented; however that towards it ſhe give both Precept and Example.

A family ſhould be the Epitome of a Church.

49. A Chriſtian Family ſhould be the Epitome of a Church: but alas how many among us lie under a perpetual Interdict, and yet not from the uſurpation of any Foreign Power, but from the irreligion of the Domeſtic. One may go into divers great Families, and after ſome ſtay there, not be able to ſay that the name of God was mention'd to any other purpoſe than that of Blaſphemy and Execration; nor a Text of Scripture, unleſs in Burleſque and profane Drollery. And ſure we need not wonder at the univerſal complaint that is now made of ill Servants, when we reflect upon this ill government of Families. They that are ſuffer'd wholly to forget their duties towards God, will not alwaies remember it towards Man. Servants are not ſuch Philoſophers that upon the bare ſtrength of a few Moral Inſtincts they will be vertuous: and if by a cuſtomary neglect of all things Sacred, they are once taught to look at nothing beyond this World, they will often find temtation enough here to diſcard their honeſty, as the moſt unthriving Trade. And indeed when the aw of Religion is quite taken off from the vulgar, there will ſcarce any thing elſe be found to keep them within any tolerable bounds; ſo that 'tis no leſs impolitic than profane to ſlacken that Rein.

The Governors of Families are reſponſible for the Piety of their Servants.

50. But it is not only the Intereſt, but the Duty of all that have Families, to keep up the eſteem and Practice of Religion in them. 'Twas one of the greateſt Endearments of *Abraham* to God, *That he would command his houſhold to keep the way of the Lord, Gen.* 18. 19. And *Joſhua* undertakes no leſs for the piety of his Houſhold than himſelf, *As for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord, Joſh.* 24. 15. And ſure 'tis but reaſonable, that where we our ſelves ow an Homage, we ſhould make all our dependants acknowledg the ſame. Beſides, it is a juſtice in reſpect of them; for where we entertain a Servant, we take the whole Perſon into our care and protection, and are falſe to that undertaking, if we ſuffer his Soul, the moſt precious part of him, to periſh. And God, who keeps account even of his meaneſt Creatures, will not patiently reſent ſuch a neglect of thoſe who bear his own Image, and were ranſom'd with as great a price as their Maſters were, *for there is no reſpect of perſons with God, Eph.* 6. 9.

The neceſſity of diſcipline in a family.

51. But when Piety is planted in a Family, 'twill ſoon wither, if it be not kept in vigor by Diſcipline: nay, indeed to have Servants ſeemingly devout in the Oratory, and yet really licentious out of it, is but to convert ones Houſe into a Theater, have a play of Religion, and keep a ſet of Actors only to perſonate and repreſent it. 'Tis therefore neceſſary to enquire how they behave themſelves when they are off the Stage; whether thoſe hands which they elevate in Praier, are at other times induſtriouſly appli'd to work; or thoſe mouths wherewith they there bleſs God, are not elſewhere fill'd with Oaths and Curſes, Scurrilities and Revilings: in a word, whether that Form of Godlineſs be not deſign'd in commutation for Sobriety and Honeſty. Indeed the Governors of Families ought to make a ſtrict Inſpection into the manners of their Servants, and where they find them good, to affix ſome ſpecial mark of Favor, by which they may both be encouraged to perſevere, and others to begin; but where they find them vicious, there as eminently to diſcountenance, ſeverely to admoniſh them, and uſe all fit means for their reclaiming, and when that ſeems hopeleſs, to diſmiſs them that they may not infect the reſt. *A little leven*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *leveneth the whole lump*, *Gal.* 5. 9. and one ill ſervant (like a periſht tooth) will be apt to corrupt his fellows. 'Tis therefore the ſame in families that it is in more public communities, where ſeverity to the ill is mercy and protection to the reſt; and were houſes thus early weeded of all idle and vicious perſons, they would not be ſo overgrown, nor degenerate into ſuch rude wilderneſſes, as many (nay I fear moſt) great families now are.

Juſtice to Servants.

52. But as ſervants are not to be tolerated in the neglect of their duty, ſo neither are they to be defeated of any of their dues. Maſters are to give to their ſervants *that which is juſt and equal*, *Col.* 4. 1. And ſure 'tis but juſt and equal that they who are rational creatures ſhould not be treated with the rigor or contemt of brutes: a ſufficient and decent proviſion both in ſickneſs and in health is a juſt debt to them, beſides an exact performance of thoſe particular contracts upon which they were entertain'd. *Laban* had ſo much of natural juſtice, that he would not take the advantage of *Jacob*'s relation to him to make him ſerve him gratis, *Becauſe thou art my brother, ſhouldſt thou therefore ſerve me for nought? tell me therefore what ſhall thy wages be? Gen.* 29. 15. But alas now-a-daies where Servants have bin told, nay expreſly articled for, their wages, 'tis with many no eaſy thing to get it: nay 'tis thought by ſome Maſters an inſolence, a piece of ill manners to demand it; and when they have worn out a ſervant, they either pay him not at all, or with the ſame protraction and regret, which they do their Tailors for the old Clothes they have caſt off. I fear there are many inſtances of this, eſpecially among great Perſons, it being a receiv'd Mode with too many of them to pay no Debts to thoſe who are too mean to conteſt with them. But however they may ruffle it out with Men, it will one day arraign them before God as moſt injurious Oppreſſors; there being no Crime of that kind more frequently or ſeverely branded in Scripture, than this of the detention of the Wages of the Servant and Hireling. Beſides, this example of Injuſtice, wherein the Servant is paſſive, is often tranſcrib'd by him in acts of fraud and deceit, and he is apt to think it but an equal retaliation, to break his Truſt where the Maſter breaks his Covenant; and when he once attempts to be his own Pay-maſter, 'tis not to be doubted but he will allow himſelf large Uſe for the forbearance of his Wages; ſo that the courſe is no leſs unprofitable to the Maſter, than unjuſt and diſhonorable.

How far the Wife is therein concern'd.

53. I am not ſure 'tis always in the Wives power to prevent this or any of the former faults in the menage of the Family. For her Autority being but ſubordinate, if the Husband who is ſupreme ſuſpend her Power, he do's by that vacating her rule, take off the duty conſequent to it; ſo that what I have ſaid, can be obligatory to none that are ſo impeded: but to thoſe who can either do it themſelves, or perſwade their Husbands to it, the omiſſion will be their ſin: all the profaneſs and diſorder of the Family will be charg'd upon their account, if it came by their default.

The burthen of a multitude of Servants.

54. And this, methinks, is a conſideration that may much mortifie one uſual piece of vanity, I mean, that of a multitude of Servants. We ſhall all of us find burthen enough of our own perſonal miſcarriages, and need not contrive to fetch in more weight from others. And in Families 'tis generally obſervable, That the bigger they are, the worſe; vice gains boldneſs by numbers, is hatch'd up by the warmth of a full Society; and we daily ſee People venture upon thoſe Enormities in conſort and in a croud, which they would not dare, did they think they ſtood ſingle. Beſides, the wider the Province is, the more difficult it is well to adminiſter it; and in a heap of Servants many faults will ſcape undiſcern'd, eſpecially conſidering the common Confederacy there is uſually among them, for the eluding of Diſcipline: ſo that what the Wiſe man ſpeaks of not deſiring a multitude of unprofitable Children, I think may be very well appli'd to Servants, whoſe unprofitableneſs uſually increaſes together with their number. I have now run thro' the ſeveral Obligations conſequent to the Married State, wherein even upon this very curſory View, there appears ſo many Particulars, that if they were all duly attended, Ladies need not be much at a loſs how to entertain themſelves, nor run abroad in a Romantic Queſt after Foreign Divertiſements, when they have ſuch variety of Engagements at Home.

SECT. III.

Of Widows.

The Widow is not freed from all duties to a husband.

1. THE next ſtate which can ſucceed to that of Marriage, is Widowhood, which tho' it ſuperſedes thoſe Duties which were terminated merely in the perſon of the Husband, yet it endears thoſe which may be paid to his Aſhes. *Love is ſtrong as death, Cant.* 8. 6. and therefore when it is pure and genuine, cannot be extinguiſh'd by it, but burns like the Funeral-Lamps of old even in Vaults and Charnel-houſes. The conjugal Love tranſplanted into the Grave, (as into a finer Mold) improves into Piety, and laies a kind of ſacred Obligation upon the Widow, to perform all offices of reſpect and kindneſs which his Remains are capable of.

To the body of the dead husband by a decent interment.

2. Now thoſe Remains are of three ſorts, his Body, his Memory, and his Children. The moſt proper expreſſion of her love to the firſt, is in giving it an honorable Interment; I mean not ſuch as may vie with the *Poland* Extravagance (of which 'tis obſerv'd, that two or three near ſucceeding Funerals ruin the Family) but prudently proportion'd to his Quality and Fortune, ſo that her Zeal to his Corps may not injure a Nobler

Relict of him, His Children. And this decency is a much better inſtance of her kindneſs, than all thoſe Tragical Furies wherewith ſome Women ſeem tranſported towards their dead Husbands, thoſe frantic Embraces and careſſes of a Carcaſs, which betray a little too much the ſenſuality of their Love. And it is ſomthing obſervable, That thoſe vehement Paſſions quickly exhauſt themſelves, and by a kind of Sympathetic Efficacy, as the Body (on which their affection was fixt) molders, ſo do's that alſo; nay often it attends not thoſe leſurely degrees of diſſolution, but by a more precipitate motion, ſeems rather to vaniſh than conſume.

To the memory of the huſband.

3. The more valuable Kindneſs therefore, is that to his Memory, endevoring to embalm that, keep it from periſhing; and by this innocent Magic (as the Egyptians were wont by a more guilty) ſhe may converſe with the Dead, repreſent him to her own Thoughts, that his Life may ſtill be repeated to her: and as in a broken Mirror the refraction multiplies the Images, ſo by his diſſolution every hour preſents diſtinct Idea's of him; ſo that ſhe ſees him the oftner, for his being hid from her Eies. But as they uſe not to Embalm without Odors, ſo ſhe is not only to preſerve but perfume his Memory, render it as fragrant as ſhe can, not only to her ſelf, but others; by reviving the remembrance of whatever was Praiſeworthy in him, vindicating him from all Calumnies and falſe Accuſations, and ſtifling (or allaying) even True Ones as much as ſhe can. And indeed a Widow can no way better provide for her own Honor, than by this tenderneſs of her Husbands.

In doing nothing low or indecent.

4. Yet there is another expreſſion of it, inferior to none of the former, and that is, the ſetting ſuch a value upon her relation to him, as to do nothing unworthy of it. 'Twas the dying charge of *Auguſtus* to his Wife *Livia, Behave thy ſelf well, and remember our Marriage.* And ſhe who has bin Wife to a Perſon of Honor, muſt ſo remember it, as not to do any thing below her ſelf, or which he (could he have foreſeen it) ſhould juſtly have bin aſham'd of.

The laſt tribute to the husband, is paid him in his Children.

5. The laſt tribute ſhe can pay him, is in his Children. Theſe he leaves as his Proxies to receive the Kindneſs of which himſelf is uncapable; ſo that the Children of a Widow may claim a double portion of the Mothers love; one upon their Native right, as hers; the other, as a bequeſt in right of their dead Father. And indeed, ſince ſhe is to ſupply the place of both Parents, 'tis but neceſſary ſhe ſhould put on the Affections of both, and to the tenderneſs of a Mother, add the care and conduct of a Father. Firſt, in a ſedulous care of their Education. And next, in the prudent managery of their Fortunes; an order that is ſomtimes unhappily inverted, and mothers are ſo concern'd to have the Eſtate proſper in their tuition, that the Children cannot; whilſt (by an unſeaſonable Frugality) to ſave a little Expence, they deny them the advantage of an Ingenuous and Gentile Breeding, ſwell their Eſtates perhaps to a vaſt Bulk, but ſo contract and narrow their Minds, that they know not how to diſpoſe them to any real benefit of themſelves, or others. And this is one of the moſt pernicious Parſimonies imaginable. A Mother by this ſeems to adopt the Fortune, and abdicate the Child, who is only made the Beaſt to bear thoſe loads of Wealth ſhe will lay on, and which ſhe evidently owns as the greateſt Treſure, ſince in tenderneſs to that ſhe neglects him.

Kindneſs is in nothing better ſhewn than in beſtowing education.

6. Yet ſomtimes the ſame Effect ſprings from another Cauſe, and Children are ill bred, not becauſe the Mother grudges the charge, but out of a Feminine fondneſs, which permits her not to part with them to

the proper places for their education. Like *Jacob* to *Benjamin*, her Soul is ſo bound up in them, that ſhe cannot lend them a while even to their own moſt neceſſary concerns. And this, tho' not ſo ignoble a motive as the other, is of no leſs miſchief, at leaſt to her Sons, who being by it confin'd to home, are conſequently condemn'd to be poyſon'd (if with nothing elſe, yet) with the flatteries of Servants and Tenants, who think thoſe the beſt expedient to ſecure their own ſtation. And with theſe the young Maſter or Landlord is ſo blown up, that as if his Manors were the confines of the World, he can look at nothing beyond them; ſo that when at laſt he breaks looſe from his Mothers arms, and comes abroad, he expects ſcarce to find his Equals, much leſs his Betters; thinks he is ſtill to receive the ſame fawning Adorations which he was us'd to at home: and being poſſeſt with this inſolent expectation, he will ſcarce be undeceiv'd, but at the price of many affronts, nay, perhaps he may buy his experience with the loſs of his life; by his ill manners draw on a Quarrel, wherein he finally periſhes. That this is no impoſſible Suppoſition, ſome unhappy Mothers have found to their unſpeakable affliction.

Education abroad more advantageous than at home.

7. 'Tis not to be denied, but there are alſo dangers conſequent to the breeding Children abroad, Vice having inſinuated it ſelf even into the places of Erudition, and having not only as many, but the very ſame Academies with Vertue and Learning; ſo that the extreme depravation of the times new ſtates the Queſtion, and we are not to conſider which is beſt, but which is the leaſt ill diſpoſure of Children. And in that competition ſure the home Education will be caſt; for there they may ſuck all the Venom, and nothing of the Antidote; they will not only be taught baſe things, but (as I before obſerv'd) by the baſeſt Tutors, ſuch as will add all the moſt ſordid circumſtances to the improving of a Crime: whereas abroad they are firſt not like to meet with any whoſe intereſt it is ſo much to make them Vicious. And ſecondly, they may (as ill as the world is) meet with many who may give them both Precepts and Examples of a better kind. Beſides the Diſcipline uſed in thoſe Communities makes them know themſelves; and the various ſorts of Learning they may acquire, will not only prove uſeful divertiſement (the want of which is the great ſpring of miſchief) but will, if rightly apply'd, furniſh them with Ingenious and Vertuous Principles, ſuch as may ſet them above all vile and ignoble practices. So that there ſeems a conſpiration of motives to wreſt the child from the relucting Mother, and to perſwade her for a while to deny her ſelf that deſire of her eies, that ſo he may at laſt anſwer the more rational deſire of her heart.

Kindneſs to Children ſhewn in managing their Fortune.

8. As to the other part of her Obligation, the managing of their Fortune, there is the ſame rule for her as for all other perſons that have a Truſt, *viz.* to do as for themſelves; that is, with the ſame care and diligence (if not a greater) as in her own peculiar Concern. I do not ſay that ſhe ſhall confound the property, and make it indeed her own, by applying it to her particular uſe: a thing I fear which is too often done, eſpecially by the gaier ſort of widows, who to keep up their own Equipage, do ſomtimes incroach upon their ſons peculiar. And I wiſh even that (tho' bad enough) were the only caſe wherein it were done: but 'tis ſomtimes to make her a better prize to a ſecond husband. She goes into another family, and as if ſhe were a Colony ſent out by her ſon, he muſt pay for the planting her there: indeed the oft repeating this injury, has advanc'd it now into a cuſtom, and the management of the Minors eſtate is reckon'd on as part of the Widows fortune. But I confeſs I ſee not

what there is in the title of a Mother, that can legitimate her defrauding her Child; it rather envenoms the Crime, and adds Unnaturalneſs to Deceit. Beſides 'tis a prepoſterous ſort of guilt. Orphans and Widows are in Scripture link'd together as objects of God's and good mens pity, and of ill mens oppreſſion, and how ill alas do's civil war look among fellow-ſufferers? The Widow to injure the Orphan is like that uncouth oppreſſion *Solomon* ſpeaks of, *Prov.* 28. 3. *A poor man that oppreſſeth the poor, is like a ſweeping rain which leaveth no food.* Such kind of rapines are as exceſſive in their degree, as prodigious in their kind: and I believe there are many inſtances of Sons, who have ſuffer'd more by the Guardanſhip of their Mothers, than they could probably have done by the outrage of ſtrangers.

Failance herein is an injuſtice moſt highly aggravated.

9. How well ſuch Mothers anſwer their Obligations to their dead Huſbands, I muſt leave it to their own Conſciences to diſcuſs, I ſhall only offer them theſe ſteps of gradation by which to proceed. Firſt that Injuſtice of any ſort is a great ſin, ſecondly that when 'tis in a matter of truſt 'tis complicated with Treachery alſo, thirdly that of all truſts thoſe to the dead have alwaies bin eſteem'd the moſt ſacred: if they can find any allay to theſe by the two remaining circumſtances, that 'tis the truſt of a husband, and the intereſt of a child, I ſhall confeſs them very ſubtil Caſuiſts.

The duty of the Widow in reſpect of her ſelf, a vacancy to piety.

10. I have hitherto ſpoke of what the widow ows to her dead husband; but there is alſo ſomwhat of peculiar Obligation in relation to her ſelf. God who has plac'd us in this World to purſue the intereſts of a better, directs all the ſignal acts of his Providence to that end, and intends we ſhould ſo interpret them. So that every great change that occurs, is deſign'd either to recal us from a wrong way, or to quicken our pace in the right; and a widow may more than conjecture, that when God takes away the mate of her boſom, reduces her to a ſolitude, he do's by it ſound a retreat from the lighter jollities and gaieties of the world. And as in a compliance with civil cuſtom ſhe immures her ſelf, ſits in darkneſs for a while; ſo ſhe ſhould put on a more retir'd temper of mind, a more ſtrict and ſevere behavior, and that not to be caſt off with her veil, but to be the conſtant dreſs of her Widowhood. Indeed that State as it requires a great ſobriety and piety, ſo it affords many advantages towards it. The Apoſtle tells us, *that ſhe who is married careth for the things of the world, how ſhe may pleaſe her husband*, 1 *Cor.* 7. 34. There are many things which are but the due compliances of a wife, which yet are great avocations, and interrupters of a ſtrict Devotion; when ſhe is manumitted from that ſubjection, when ſhe has leſs of *Martha's care of ſerving*, ſhe is then at liberty to choſe *Mary's part*, *Luke* 10. 42. She has her time and her fortune at her own command, and conſequently may much more abound in the works both of Piety and Charity. We find God himſelf retrencht the Wives power of binding her own ſoul, *Numb.* 30. Her vows were totally inſignificant without her husbands confirmation; but the Widow might devote her ſelf to what degree ſhe pleas'd, her piety has no reſtraint from any other inconſiſtent obligation, but may ſwell as high as it can. Thoſe hours which were before her husbands right, ſeem now to devolve on God the grand proprietor of our time: that diſcourſe and free converſe wherewith ſhe entertain'd him, ſhe may now convert into colloquies and ſpiritual entercourſe with her Maker; and that love which was only human before, by the change of its object acquires a ſublimity, is exalted into divine, from loyal duty and conjugal affection becomes the eternal

work and happineſs of Angels, the ardor of a Cherubim. Thus may ſhe in a higher ſenſe verify *Samſon*'s riddle, *Judges* 14. 14. *fetch hony out of a carcaſs*, make her husbands Aſhes (like thoſe of the heifer under the law *Heb.* 9. 13.) *her Purification*: his corruption may help to put on incorruption, and her loſs of a temporary comfort may inſtate her in an eternal.

To dedicate as her ſelf, ſo her fortune.

11. And as her ſelf, ſo her fortune may alſo be conſecrated: And indeed if ſhe be, that will alſo: If ſhe have made an eſcape out of *Egypt*, there ſhall not a hoof be left behind her, *Exod.* 10. 26. no part of her poſſeſſions will be aſſign'd to vanity and exceſs. She who hath really devoted her ſelf to Piety, *faſted and praied* with *Anna, Luke* 2. 37. will alſo be *full of good works and alms-deeds* with *Tabitha, Acts* 9. 36. Thus ſhe may be a mother when ſhe ceaſes to bear; and tho' ſhe no more encreaſe one family, ſhe may ſupport many: And certainly the fertility of the womb, is not ſo valuable as this of the bowels: Fruitfulneſs can be but a happineſs, Compaſſion is a vertue. Nay indeed 'tis a greater and more certain happineſs: a Child is not brought forth but with pangs and anguiſh, but a work of Mercy is produc'd not only with eaſe, but delight. Beſides, ſhe that bears a Child, knows not whether it may prove a Bleſſing or a Curſe; but Charity gives certain title to a Bleſſing, and engages the moſt ſolvent Paymaſter, even God himſelf, who owns all ſuch diſburſments as a loan to him. *He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord: and that which he hath given, will he pay him again, Prov.* 19. 17.

The ancient charity of Widows.

12. There was in the Primitive Times an Eccleſiaſtical Order of Widows, which St. *Paul* mentions, 1 *Tim.* 5. whoſe whole Miniſtry was devoted to Charity. They were indeed of the poorer ſort, fit rather to receive than give Alms; yet the leſs they could do with their Purſes, the more was required of their Perſons, the humbler offices of *waſhing the Saints feet*, the careful task of *bringing up children*, and a diligent *attendance on every good work*. And ſure there is parity of Reaſon, that thoſe who upon the ſcore of their Wealth, exemt themſelves from thoſe Laborious Services, ſhould commute for it by more Liberal Alms. In the warmth and zeal of Chriſtianity, Women of the higheſt Quality performed both ſorts of Charity, forgot their Greatneſs in their condeſcenſions, yet aſſum'd it again in their Bounty; founded Hoſpitals, and yet with a *labor of love*, as the Apoſtle ſtiles it, *Heb.* 6. 10. diſdain'd not ſomtimes to ſerve in them. But theſe are examples not like to be tranſcrib'd in our daies. Greatneſs is now grown to ſuch an unweildineſs that it cannot ſtoop tho' to the moſt Chriſtian Offices, and yet can as little ſoar up in any Munificent Charities: it ſtands like *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Golden Image, a vaſt Bulk only to be ador'd.

The great advantages that Dowagers of great families and fortunes have to charities.

13. Now certainly, if any woman be qualified to avert this reproch, it muſt be the Dowagers of great Families and Fortunes: they have none to controul their Viſits to the ſick and afflicted, or to reſent a diſparagement from their Humility, neither have they an account to give of their Poſſeſſions to any but God and themſelves; to him ſure they can bring none ſo like to procure them the Eulogy of *well done thou good and faithful ſervant*, Matth. 25. 21. as a Catalogue of their Alms. Nor indeed can they any other way diſpoſe their Fortune ſo much to their own contentment; they may poſſibly cloy and ſatiate their ſenſes, make proviſion for the fleſh; but that no way ſatisfies their reaſon, much leſs their Conſcience. The Soul, which is the ſuperior part, is quite left

out in that diſtribution; nothing is communicated to it but the guilt of thoſe dear bought Exceſſes. The only way it has to be a ſharer in their Wealth, is by a charitable diſpenſing. The Poor are its Proxies as well as Gods, and tho' in all other reſpects we may ſay to the Soul, as the *Pſalmiſt* do's to God, *Pſal.* 16. 2. *my goods extend not to thee*: yet by this way, it becomes not only a partaker, but the chief proprietor, and all is laid out for its uſe. The harboring an out-caſt, builds it *an everlaſting habitation, Luke* 16. 9. the clothing the naked, arrays it in *pure white linen, Rev.* 19. 8. and the feeding the hungry, makes it a gueſt *at the ſupper of the Lamb*, v. 9. Nay, it gains not only an indefeiſible title to theſe happy Reverſions, but it has a great deal in preſent poſſeſſion, a huge rational Complacence in the right applying of Wealth, and doing that with it for which 'twas deſign'd; yet more, it gives a ſenſitive delight, nothing being more agreeable to human nature, than the doing good to its own kind. A ſeaſonable Alms leaves a greater exultation and tranſport in the Giver, than it can ordinarily raiſe in the Receiver; ſo exemplifying the Maxim of our Bleſſed Lord, that it is a *more bleſſed thing to give than to receive, Acts* 20. 35. This indeed is a way to elude the ſevere denunciation of the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 5. 6. *A widow that liveth in this pleaſure, is not dead whilſt ſhe liveth*; but on the contrary, ſhall live when ſhe dies; when ſhe reſigns her Breath, ſhall improve her being: the Praiers of the Poor, like a benign gale, ſhall aſſiſt her flight to the Region of Bliſs; and ſhe who has here cheriſh'd the afflicted Members, ſhall there be indiſſolubly united to their Glorious Head.

Theſe advantages redeem Widowhood from being a forlorn eſtate.

14. And now methinks Widowhood, under this aſpect, is quite transform'd, is not ſo forlorn, ſo deſolate an eſtate as 'tis uſually eſteem'd. And would all Widows uſe but this expedient, thus devote themſelves to Piety and Charity, it would, like the healing Tree, *Exod.* 15. 25. ſweeten theſe Waters of *Marah*, render the condition not only ſupportable but pleaſant; and they would not need to make ſuch affrighted, ſuch diſadvantageous eſcapes, as many do, from it. 'Tis true, the Apoſtles affirmation is unqueſtionable, that *the wife, when her husband is dead, is at liberty to be married to whom ſhe will*, 1 *Cor.* 7. 39. But the advice he ſubjoins is authentic too, *ſhe is happier if ſhe ſo abide*. She that may ſolace her ſelf in the Society, in the Love of her God, makes an ignoble deſcent to Human Embraces; ſhe that may purchaſe Heaven with her Wealth, buys a very dear Bargain of the beſt Husband on Earth. Nay indeed, upon a meer ſecular account, it ſeems not very prudent to relinquiſh both Liberty and Property, to eſpouſe at the beſt a Subjection, but perhaps a Slavery: it a little reſembles the mad Frolicks of freed Gally-ſlaves, who play away their Liberty as ſoon as they regain it.

Of ſecond Marriage.

15. Marriage is ſo great an adventure, that once ſeems enough for the whole life: for whether they have bin proſperous or adverſe in the firſt, it do's almoſt diſcourage a ſecond attemt. She that has had a good Husband, may be ſuppos'd to have his Idea ſo fixt in her Heart, that it will be hard to introduce any new Form: nay farther, ſhe may very reaſonably doubt, that in this common dearth of Vertue, two good Husbands will ſcarce fall to one Womans ſhare, and an ill one will become more intolerable to her, by the reflections ſhe will be apt to make on the better. On the other ſide, if ſhe have had a bad, the ſmart ſure cannot but remain after the rod is taken off; the memory of what ſhe has ſuffer'd ſhould, methinks, be a competent caution againſt new adventures.

ventures. Yet experience ſhews us that women (tho' the weaker ſex) have commonly fortitude enough to encounter and baffle all theſe conſiderations. It is not therefore to be expected that many will by any thing that hath or can be ſaid be diverted from remarrying: and indeed ſhe that do's not preſerve her Widowhood upon the accounts forementionꝰd, may perhaps better relinquiſh it. St. *Paul* we ſee adviſes that thoſe *Widows* who found no better emploiment *than going from houſe to houſe*, that grew by their vacancy to *be tatlers and buſy bodies* 1 *Tim.* 5.13. ſhould marry again; it being the beſt way to fix theſe wandring planets, to find them buſineſs of their own at home, that ſo they may not ramble abroad to intermedle with that of others. And the truth is they that cannot brook the retiredneſs and gravity which becomes a Widow, had better put themſelves in a ſtate that leſs requires it; and if they reſolve not to conform their minds to their condition, to bring their condition to their minds; but in the doing that there will be ſome cautions very neceſſary to be obſerv'd. I ſhall reduce them to two, the one relating to the time, the other to the equality of the match.

A decency in point of time to be obſerv'd.

16. First in reſpect of time, common decency requires that there be a conſiderable interval between the parting with one husband and the chooſing another. This has been ſo much obſerv'd by Nations that were at all civiliz'd, that we find *Numa* made it a law, that no Widow ſhould marry under ten months, and if any did ſhe was to ſacrifice as for the expiation of a crime. And this continued in force many ages after, inſomuch that when upon reaſons of State *Auguſtus* found it uſeful to marry his ſiſter *Octavia* to *Antonius*, nothing leſs than a decree of the Senate could licenſe the anticipating the time; ſo jealous obſervers were they of this point of Civility, that they thought the whole State was concern'd in the violation. 'Tis true we have no law in the caſe, but we have ſomwhat of cuſtom. I know not how long we ſhall have, ſince the frequent breaches of it threaten quite to cancel it: yet a Woman that is tender of her honor will ſcarce give her example towards the reſcinding it. The wounds of grief are ſeldom heal'd by any hand but that of time, and therefore too ſudden a cure ſhews the hurt pierc'd not deep; and ſhe that can make her mourning veil an optic to draw a new lover nearer to her ſight, gives cauſe to ſuſpect the ſables were all without.

So alſo the equality of condition.

17. The next thing conſiderable is the equality of the match. Marriage is ſo cloſe a link, that to have it eaſy 'tis good to have the parties as even proportion'd as may be. And firſt in reſpect of quality and fortune, 'tis to be wiſh'd there ſhould be no eminent diſproportion. Thoſe that meet moſt upon a level, are leaſt ſubject to thoſe upbraidings that often attend a great deſcent of either party. It is therefore no prudent motive, by which ſome Widows are ſwai'd, who marry only for a great Title; who often do not meet with ſo much of obeiſance from ſtrangers, as they do with contemt from their husbands and his relations. There have bin many examples of Lords, who have uſed rich, but inferior, widows like ſpunges, ſqueez'd them to fill themſelves with their wealth, and them only with the air of a big name. On the other ſide for a woman to marry very meanly and too much below her ſelf, is rather worſe; thoſe kind of matches are ordinarily made in a tranſport of paſſion, and when that abates and leaves her to ſober reflections, ſhe will probably be ſo angry with her ſelf, that ſhe will ſcarce be well pleas'd with her husband. A ſtate of ſubjection is a little ſweetned by the worth and dignity of the ruler: for as it is more honorable, ſo 'tis alſo more eaſy, the ſerviler ſpi-

rits being of all others the moſt imperious in command. And ſure 'twill not a little grate a woman of honor, to think ſhe has made ſuch a one her Maſter, who perhaps would before have thought it a preferment to have bin her ſervant. Nay farther, ſuch marriages have commonly an ill reflection on the modeſty of the Woman, it being uſually preſum'd that where the diſtance was ſo great, as to diſcourage ſuch an attemt on his part, there was ſome invitation on hers. So that upon all accounts ſhe is very forlorn who thus diſpoſes of her ſelf. Yet 'tis too well known ſuch matches have oft bin made, and the ſame levity and inconſideration may betray others to it: and therefore 'tis their concern well to ballaſt their minds, and to provide that their Paſſion never get the aſcendant over their Reaſon.

As alſo equality of judgment in Religion.

18. Another very neceſſary equality is that of their judgment as to Religion. I do not mean that they are to catechize each other as to every minute ſpeculative point; but that they be of the ſame profeſſion, ſo as to join together in the worſhip of God. It is ſure very uncomfortable that thoſe who have ſo cloſely combin'd all their other intereſts, ſhould be diſunited in the greateſt; that one Church cannot hold them, whom one houſe, one bed do's; and that religion which is in it ſelf the moſt uniting thing, ſhould be the only diſagreement between them. I know 'tis oft made a compact in ſuch matches, that neither ſhall impoſe their opinion upon the other: yet I doubt 'tis ſeldom kept, unleſs it be by thoſe whoſe careleſneſs of all religion abates their zeal to any one. But where they have any earneſtneſs in their way, eſpecially where one party thinks the other in a damnable error, 'twill ſcarce be poſſible to refrain endeavoring to reduce them; and that endeavor begets diſputes, thoſe diſputes heats, thoſe heats diſguſts, and thoſe diſguſts perhaps end in averſion; ſo that at laſt their affections grow as unreconcileable as their opinions, and their religious jars draw on domeſtic. Beſides if none of theſe perſonal debates happen, yet the education of the Children will be matter of diſpute; the one parent will ſtill be countermining the other, each ſeeking to recover the others proſelytes. Nay it introduces faction into the inferior parts of the family too: the ſervants according to their different perſwaſions bandy into leagues and parties; ſo that it endangers, if not utterly deſtroies all concord in families: and all this train of miſchiefs ſhould methinks be a competent prejudice againſt ſuch matches.

Alſo equality in years.

19. There is yet a third particular wherein any great diſproportion is much to be avoided, and that is in Years. The humors of youth and age differ ſo widely, that there had need be a great deal of skill to compoſe the diſcord into a harmony. When a young Woman marries an old man, there are commonly jealouſies on the one part and loathings on the other, and if there be not an eminent degree of diſcretion in one or both, there will be perpetual diſagreements. But this is a caſe that do's not often happen among thoſe I now ſpeak to: for tho' the avarice of Parents ſomtimes forces maids upon ſuch matches, yet Widows who are their own chooſers ſeldom make ſuch elections. The inequality among them commonly falls on the other ſide, and old women marry young men. Indeed any marriage is in ſuch a folly and dotage. They who muſt ſuddenly make their beds in the duſt, what ſhould they think of a nuptial couch? And to ſuch the anſwer of the Philoſopher is appoſite, who being demanded what was the fitteſt time for marrying, replied, for the young not yet, for the old not at all.

The accumulated abſurdities of diſproportioned marriage.

20. But this dotage becomes perfect frenzy and madneſs when they chooſe young husbands: this is an accumulation of abſurdities and contradictions. The Husband and the Wife are but one perſon; and yet at once young and old, freſh and wither'd. 'Tis a reverſing the decrees of nature: and therefore 'twas no ill anſwer which *Dionyſius* the Tyrant gave his Mother, who in her age deſign'd ſuch a match, That tho' by his regal power he could diſpence with poſitive laws, yet he could not abrogate thoſe of nature, or make it fit for her an old Woman to marry a young Man. 'Tis indeed an inverſion of ſeaſons, a confounding the Kalender, making a mungrel month of *May* and *December:* and the conjunction proves as fatal as it is prodigious; it being ſcarce ever ſeen that ſuch a match proves tolerably happy. And indeed 'tis not imaginable how it ſhould; for firſt 'tis to be preſum'd ſhe that marries ſo muſt marry meanly, no young man who do's not need her fortune will take her perſon. For tho' ſome have the humor to give great rates for inanimate antiquities, yet none will take the living gratis. Next ſhe never miſſes to be hated by him ſhe marries: he looks on her as his rack and torment, thinks himſelf under the lingring torture deviſ'd by *Mezentius*, a living body tied to a dead. Nor muſt ſhe think to cure this by any the little adulteries of art: ſhe may buy beauty, and yet can never make it her own; may paint, yet never be fair. 'Tis like enameling a mud-wall, the courſneſs of the ground will ſpoil the varniſh; and the greateſt exquiſitneſs of dreſs ſerves but to illuſtrate her native blemiſhes. So that all ſhe gains by this is to make him ſcorn as well as abhor her.

And no leſs miſeries attending it.

21. Indeed there is nothing can be more ridiculous, than an old Woman gaily ſet out; and it was not unaptly ſaid of *Diogenes* to ſuch a one, If this decking be for the living, you are deceiv'd; if for the dead, make haſte to them: and I doubt many young Husbands will be ready to ſay as much. Nay becauſe death comes not quick enough to part them, there is few have patience to attend its loitering pace: the man bids adiew to the Wife tho' not to her fortune, takes that to maintain his luxuries elſewhere, allows her ſome little annuity, and makes her a penſioner to her own eſtate. So that he has his deſign, but ſhe none of hers: he married for her fortune, and he has it; ſhe for his perſon, and has it not: and which is worſe buys her defeat with the loſs of all, he commonly leaving her as emty of mony as he found her of wit.

Which yet are unpittied.

22. And truly this is a condition deplorable enough, and yet uſually fails even of that comfort which is the laſt reſerve of the miſerable, I mean Pity. 'Tis the wiſe mans queſtion, *Eccleſ.* 12. 13. *Who will pity a charmer that is bitten with a Serpent?* He might have preſum'd leſs on his skill, and kept himſelf at a ſafer diſtance: and ſure the like may be ſaid of her. Alas what are her feeble charms, that ſhe ſhould expect by them to fix the giddy appetites of youth? And ſince ſhe could ſo preſume without ſenſe, none will regret that ſhe ſhould be convinc'd by ſmart. Beſides, this is a caſe wherein there have bin a multitude of unhappy Preſidents which might have caution'd her. He that accidentally falls down an undiſcover'd precipice is compaſſionated for his diſaſter; but he that ſtands a great while on the brink of it, looks down and ſees the bottom ſtrew'd with the mangled carcaſſes of many that have thence fallen; if he ſhall deliberately caſt himſelf into their company, the blame quite extinguiſhes the pity; he may aſtoniſh, but not melt the beholders. And truly ſhe who caſts her ſelf away in ſuch a match, betraies not leſs, but more wilfulneſs. How many ruins of unhappy wo-

men preſent themſelves to her, like the wracks of old veſſels, all ſplit upon this rock? And if ſhe will needs ſteer her courſe purpoſely to do the ſame, none ought to grudg her the ſhipwrack ſhe ſo courts.

And loaded with cenſure and reproch.

23. Nor has ſhe only this negative diſcomfort to be depriv'd of pity, but ſhe is loaded with cenſures and reproch. The World is apt enough to malicious errors, to fix blame where there is none, but 'tis ſeldom guilty of the charitative, do's not overlook the ſmalleſt appearance of evil, but generally puts the worſt conſtruction on any act, that it will with any probability bear; and according to that meſure women in this condition can expect no very mild deſcants on them. Indeed ſuch matches are ſo deſtitute of any rational Plea, that 'tis hard to derive them from any other motive than the ſenſitive. What the common conjectures are in that caſe, is as needleſs as it is unhandſom to declare: I will not ſay how true they are, but if they be, it adds another reaſon to the former, why ſuch Marriages are ſo improſperous. All diſtortions in Nature are uſually ominous; and ſure ſuch preternatural heats in Age, may very well be reckon'd as diſmal Preſages, and very certain ones too, ſince they create the ruin they foretell. And truly 'tis not only juſt, but convenient, that ſuch Motives ſhould be attended with ſuch Conſequences; that the Bitterneſs of the one, may occaſion ſome reflection on the Sordidneſs of the other. 'Tis but kindly, that ſuch an Alhallontide Spring ſhould meet with Froſts, and the unpleaſantneſs of the Event chaſtiſe the uglineſs of the Deſign; and therefore I think thoſe that are conſcious of the one, ſhould be ſo far from murmuring, that they ſhould be very thankful for the other: think it God's diſcipline to bring them again to their Wits, and not repine at that ſmart which themſelves have made neceſſary.

A ſtrange fury in women when their eſtates might be emploied to the beſt uſes of Charity, only to buy with them ſlavery and beggary.

24. And now I wiſh all the Ancienter Widows, would ſeriouſly weigh how much 'Tis their Intereſt not to ſever thoſe two Epithets; that of Ancient they cannot put off, it daily grows upon them; and that of Widow is ſure a more proportionable adjunct to it, than that of Wife; eſpecially when it is to one to whom her Age might have made her Mother. There is a Veneration due to Age, if it be ſuch as diſowns not it ſelf. *The hoary head*, ſays *Solomon*, *is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteouſneſs*, *Prov.* 16. 32. but when it will mix it ſelf with Youth, it is diſclaim'd by both, becomes the ſhame of the Old, and the ſcorn of the Young. What a ſtrange fury is it then which poſſeſſes ſuch Women, that when they may diſpoſe their Fortunes to thoſe Advantageous Deſigns before mention'd, they ſhould only buy with them, ſo undecent, ſo ridiculous a ſlavery? that when they may keep up the reputation of Modeſty and Prudence, they ſhould expoſe themſelves to an Univerſal Contemt for the want of both; and that they who might have had a Reverence, put themſelves even out of the capacity of bare Compaſſion.

This misfortune is generally founded in affectation of youth and gaiety.

25. This is ſo high a Frenzy, as ſure cannot happen in an inſtant; it muſt have ſome preparatory degrees, ſome rooting in the conſtitution and habit of the mind: Such Widows have ſure ſome lightneſs of humor, before they can be ſo giddy in their Brains, and therefore theſe that will ſecure themſelves from the Effect, muſt ſubſtract the Cauſe; if they will ſtill be wiſhing themſelves young, 'tis odds but within a while they will perſwade themſelves they are ſo. Let them therefore content themſelves to be old, and as Faſhions are varied with Times, ſo let them put on the Ornaments proper to their Seaſon; which are Piety, Gravity, and Prudence. Theſe will be not only their Ornament, but their Armor too;

this will gain them ſuch a Reverence, that will make it as improbable they ſhould be aſſaulted, as impoſſible they ſhould aſſault. For I think one may ſafely ſay, It is the want of one or all of thoſe, which betraies Women to ſuch Marriages.

And will be matter of caution to younger Widows.

26. And indeed it may be a matter of Caution, even to the younger Widows, not to let themſelves too much looſe to a light frolick Humor, which perhaps they will not be able to put off, when it is moſt neceſſary they ſhould. It will not much invite a ſober Man to marry them while they are young; and if it continue with them till they are old, it may (as Natural Motions uſe) grow more violent toward its end: precipitate them into that ruinous Folly we have before conſider'd. Yet, ſhould they happen to eſcape that, ſhould it not force them from their Widowhood, it will ſure very ill agree with it: for how prepoſterous is it for an Old Woman to delight in Gauds and Trifles, ſuch as were fitter to entertain her Grand-children? to read Romances with ſpectacles, and be at Masks and Dancings, when ſhe is fit only to act the Antics? Theſe are contradictions to Nature, the tearing off her Marks, and where ſhe has writ fifty or ſixty, to leſſen (beyond the proportion of the unjuſt Steward) and write ſixteen. And thoſe who thus manage their Widow-hood, have more reaſon to bewail it at laſt than at firſt, as having more experimentally found the miſchief of being left to their own Guidance. It will therefore concern them all to put themſelves under a ſafer Conduct, by an aſſiduous Devotion to render themſelves up to the leading of the one infallible Guide, who, if he be not a *covering of the eyes, Gen.* 20. 16. to preclude all ſecond Choices, may yet be *a light to them* for diſcerning who are fit to be choſen; that if they ſee fit to uſe their liberty and Marry, they may yet take the Apoſtles reſtriction with it, 1 *Cor.* 7. 40. that *it be only in the Lord.* Upon ſuch ſober Motives, and with ſuch due Circumſtances as may approve it to Him, and render it capable of his Benediction.

The Cloſe.

The beſt means to be ſecure in any of the before-mention'd particular eſtates, is to be furniſht with the general vertues.

1. I HAVE now gon thro' both Parts of the propos'd Method. The former has preſented thoſe Qualifications which are equally neceſſary to every Woman: Theſe, as a Root, ſend ſap and vigour to the diſtinct Branches, animate and impregnate the ſeveral ſucceſſive States thro' which ſhe is to paſs. He that hath pure Ore or Bullion, may caſt it into what Form beſt fits his uſe, nay may tranſlate it from one to another; and ſhe who has that Mine of Vertues, may furniſh out any Condition; her being good in an abſolute conſideration, will certainly make her ſo in a relative. On the other ſide, ſhe who has not ſuch a Stock, cannot keep up the Honor of any State; like corrupted Liquor, emty it from one Veſſel to another, it ſtill infects and contaminates all. And this is the cauſe that Women are alike complain'd of under all Forms, becauſe ſo many want this Fundamental Vertue: were there more good Women, there would be more modeſt Virgins, loyal and obedient Wives, and ſober Widows.

Therefore the Readers of this Tract are not to content themſelves with what refers to their condition.

2. I muſt therefore intreat thoſe who will look on this Tract, not only to ſingle out that part which bears their own Inſcription, but that they think themſelves no leſs concern'd in that which relates indefinitly to their Sex; endeavor to poſſeſs themſelves of thoſe Excellencies, which ſhould be as univerſal as their Kind: and when they are ſo ſtor'd with Matter, they may leave Providence to diverſifie the Shape, and to aſſign them their Scene of Action.

Nor barely with what they read, but draw out conſequences for themſelves.

3. And now, would God it were as eaſie to perſwade, as it is to propoſe; and that this Diſcourſe may not be taken only as a Gazet for its newneſs, and diſcarded as ſoon as read; but that it may at leaſt advance to the honor of an Almanack, be allowed one Year ere it be out of date: and in that time, if frequently and ſeriouſly conſulted, it may perhaps awaken ſome Ladies from their ſtupid Dreams, convince them that they were ſent into the World for nobler purpoſes, than only to make a little Glittering in it; like a Comet, to give a blaze, and then diſappear. And truly, if it may Operate but ſo far as to give them an effective ſenſe of that, I ſhall think it has done them a conſiderable Service. They may, I am ſure, from that Principle, deduce all neceſſary Conſequences, and I wiſh they would but take the pains to draw the Corollaries; for thoſe Inductions they make to themſelves, would be much more efficacious than thoſe which are drawn to their hands. Propriety is a great endearment, we love to be Proſelytes to our ſelves; and People oft reſiſt others Reaſons, who would upon mere partiality pay reverence to their own.

Which will give the collateral advantage of uſing the mind to conſider.

4. But beſides this, there would be another Advantage, if they could be but got to a cuſtom of conſidering, by it they might inſenſibly undermine the grand Inſtrument of their ruin. That careleſs incogitancy, ſo remarkably frequent among all, and not leaſt among Perſons of Quality, is the ſource of innumerable Miſchiefs; 'tis the *Delilah*, that at once lulls and betrays them; it keeps them in a perpetual Sleep, binds up their Faculties, ſo that, tho' they are not extinct, yet they become uſeleſs. *Plato* uſed to ſay, *That a man aſleep was good for nothing*: and 'tis certainly no leſs true of this Moral drouſineſs than the Natural. And as in Sleep the fancy only is in motion, ſo theſe inconſiderate Perſons, do rather dream than diſcourſe, entertain little trifling Images of things, which are preſented by their Senſes, but know not how to converſe with their Reaſon. So that in this drouſy ſtate, all temtations come on them with the ſame advantage, with that of *a thief in the night*; a Phraſe by which the Scripture expreſſes the moſt inevitable unforeſeen danger, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 2. We read in *Judges*, how eaſily *Laiſh* became a prey to a handful of Men, merely becauſe of this ſupine negligent humor of the Inhabitants, which had cut them off from all entercourſe with any who might have ſuccor'd them, *Judges* 18. 27, 28. and certainly it gives no leſs opportunity to our Spiritual Aſſailants, leaves us naked and unguarded to receive all their Impreſſions. How prodigious a thing is it then, that this ſtate of dulneſs and danger ſhould be affectedly choſen? yet we ſee it too often is, even by thoſe whoſe Qualities and Education fit them for more Ingenuous Elections; nay, which is yet more riddle, that very aptneſs diſenables, ſets them above what it prepares them for. Labor is lookt on as utterly incompatible with greatneſs, and Conſideration is lookt on as a labor of the mind; and there are ſome Ladies, who ſeem to reckon it as their Prerogative to be exemted from both; will no more apply their Underſtandings to any ſerious Diſcuſſion, than their Hands to the Spindle and Diſtaff; the one they think pedantic, as the other is mean. In the mean time,

by what ſtrange meaſures do they proceed? They look on Idiots as the moſt deplorable of Creatures, becauſe they want reaſon, and yet make it their own excellence and preeminence, to want the uſe of it; which is indeed ſo much worſe than to want the thing, as ſloth is worſe than poverty, a moral defect than a natural. But we may ſee by this, how much civil and ſacred Eſtimates differ: for we find the *Bereans* commended, not only as more diligent, but as more noble too, *Acts* 17. 11. becauſe they attentively *conſider'd,* and ſtrictly examin'd the *Doctrine preach'd to them.* By which they may diſcern, that in Gods Court of Honor, a ſtupid Oſcitancy is no ennobling Quality, however it comes to be thought ſo in theirs.

Conſideration would ſecure innocence.

5. And if this one point might be gain'd, if they would but ſo far actuate their Reaſon, as deliberately and duly to weigh their Intereſt, they would find that ſo ſtrictly engaging them to all that is Vertuous, that they muſt have a very invincible reſolution for ruin, if that cannot perſwade them: and I hope all women are not Medea's, whom the Poet brings in avowing the horridneſs of that fact, which yet ſhe reſolv'd to execute. They are generally rather timorous, and apt to ſtart at the apprehenſion of danger; let them but ſee a ſerpent tho' at a great diſtance, they will need no homilies or lectures to be perſwaded to fly it. And ſure did they but clearly diſcern what a ſting there is in thoſe vicious follies they embrace, their fear would make them quit their hold; put them in ſuch a trembling, as would like that of *Belſhazzars,* ſlacken their joints, and make thoſe things drop from them, which before they moſt tenaciouſly graſped. For indeed in ſin there is a conſpiration of all that can be dreadful to a rational being, ſo that one may give its compendium by the very reverſe of that which the Apoſtle gives of Godlineſs, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. for as the one *has the promiſes,* ſo the other has the curſes *of this life, and of that which is to come.*

Would aſſiſt conſcience in doing its work.

6. In this life every deprav'd act (much more habit) has a black ſhadow attending it; it caſts one inward upon the conſcience in uncomfortable upbraidings and regrets. 'Tis true indeed ſome have the art to diſguiſe that to themſelves by caſting a yet darker over it; ſuppreſſing all thoſe reluctings by an induſtrious ſtupefaction; making their ſouls ſo perfect night, that they cannot ſee thoſe black images their Conſciences repreſent. But as this renders their condition but the more wretched; ſo neither can they blind others tho' they do themſelves. Vice caſts a dark ſhadow outwards too, not ſuch as may conceal but betray it ſelf: and as the evening ſhadows increaſe in dimenſion, grow to a monſtroſity and diſproportion; ſo the longer any ill habit is continued, the more viſible, the more deform'd it appears, draws more obſervation and more cenſure.

Would ſhew the wretched conſequents of vice.

7. 'Twere indeed endleſs to reckon up the temporal evils to which it expoſes its votaries; Immodeſty deſtroys their fame, a vain Prodigality their fortune, Anger makes them mad, Pride hateful, Levity renders them deſpis'd, Obſtinacy deſperate, and Irreligion is a complication of all theſe, fills up their meaſure both of guilt and wretchedneſs. So that had Vertue no other advocate, her very Antagoniſt would plead for her: the miſerable conſequences of vice, would like the flames of *Sodom* ſend all conſidering perſons to that little *Zoar,* which how deſpicable ſoever it may have appear'd before, cannot but look invitingly when ſafety is inſcrib'd on its gates.

The future account in another world.

8. But it muſt infinitly more do ſo if they pleaſe to open a viſto into the other World, make uſe of divine perſpectives to diſcern thoſe diſtant

objects which their groſſer ſenſes do here intercept. There they may ſee the diſmal Cataſtrophe of their Comedies, the miſerable inverſion of all unlawful or unbounded pleſures: there that Prophetic menace concerning *Babylon* which we find *Rev.* 18. 7. will be literally verified upon every unhappy ſoul, *According as ſhe exalted her ſelf and lived delicately, ſo much the more tribulation give her*; the torment of that life will bear proportion to the pride and luxuries of this. It will therefore be neceſſary for thoſe who here wallow in pleſures, to confront to them the remembrance of thoſe rivers of Brimſtone, and ask themſelves the Prophets queſtion, *who can dwell with everlaſting burnings*? We find *Eſay*, when he denounces but temporal judgments againſt the daughters of *Zion*, he exactly purſues the Antitheſis, and to every part of their effeminate delicacy he oppoſes the direct contrary hardſhip, inſtead of *ſweet ſmells there ſhall be a ſtink, inſtead of a girdle a rent, inſtead of well ſet hair baldneſs, inſtead of a ſtomacher a girding with ſackcloth, and burning inſtead of beauty*, *Iſaiah* 3. 24.

And puniſhments that will never end.

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by what ſtrange meaſures do they proceed? They look on Idiots as the moſt deplorable of Creatures, becauſe they want reaſon, and yet make it their own excellence and preeminence, to want the uſe of it; which is indeed ſo much worſe than to want the thing, as ſloth is worſe than poverty, a moral defect than a natural. But we may ſee by this, how much civil and ſacred Eſtimates differ: for we find the *Bereans* commended, not only as more diligent, but as more noble too, *Acts* 17. 11. becauſe they attentively *conſider'd*, and ſtrictly examin'd the *Doctrine preach'd to them.* By which they may diſcern, that in Gods Court of Honor, a ſtupid Oſcitancy is no ennobling Quality, however it comes to be thought ſo in theirs.

Conſideration would ſecure innocence.

5. And if this one point might be gain'd, if they would but ſo far actuate their Reaſon, as deliberately and duly to weigh their Intereſt, they would find that ſo ſtrictly engaging them to all that is Vertuous, that they muſt have a very invincible reſolution for ruin, if that cannot perſwade them: and I hope all women are not Medea's, whom the Poet brings in avowing the horridneſs of that fact, which yet ſhe reſolv'd to execute. They are generally rather timorous, and apt to ſtart at the apprehenſion of danger; let them but ſee a ſerpent tho' at a great diſtance, they will need no homilies or lectures to be perſwaded to fly it. And ſure did they but clearly diſcern what a ſting there is in thoſe vicious follies they embrace, their fear would make them quit their hold; put them in ſuch a trembling, as would like that of *Belſhazzars*, ſlacken their joints, and make thoſe things drop from them, which before they moſt tenaciouſly graſped. For indeed in ſin there is a conſpiration of all that can be dreadful to a rational being, ſo that one may give its compendium by the very reverſe of that which the Apoſtle gives of Godlineſs, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. for as the one *has the promiſes*, ſo the other has the curſes *of this life, and of that which is to come.*

Would aſſiſt conſcience in doing its work.

6. In this life every deprav'd act (much more habit) has a black ſhadow attending it; it caſts one inward upon the conſcience in uncomfortable upbraidings and regrets. 'Tis true indeed ſome have the art to diſguiſe that to themſelves by caſting a yet darker over it; ſuppreſſing all thoſe reluctings by an induſtrious ſtupefaction; making their ſouls ſo perfect night, that they cannot ſee thoſe black images their Conſciences repreſent. But as this renders their condition but the more wretched; ſo neither can they blind others tho' they do themſelves. Vice caſts a dark ſhadow outwards too, not ſuch as may conceal but betray it ſelf: and as the evening ſhadows increaſe in dimenſion, grow to a monſtroſity and diſproportion; ſo the longer any ill habit is continued, the more viſible, the more deform'd it appears, draws more obſervation and more cenſure.

Would ſhew the wretched conſequents of vice.

7. 'Twere indeed endleſs to reckon up the temporal evils to which it expoſes its votaries; Immodeſty deſtroys their fame, a vain Prodigality their fortune, Anger makes them mad, Pride hateful, Levity renders them deſpis'd, Obſtinacy deſperate, and Irreligion is a complication of all theſe, fills up their meaſure both of guilt and wretchedneſs. So that had Vertue no other advocate, her very Antagoniſt would plead for her: the miſerable conſequences of vice, would like the flames of *Sodom* ſend all conſidering perſons to that little *Zoar*, which how deſpicable ſoever it may have appear'd before, cannot but look invitingly when ſafety is inſcrib'd on its gates.

The future account in another world.

8. But it muſt infinitly more do ſo if they pleaſe to open a viſto into the other World, make uſe of divine perſpectives to diſcern thoſe diſtant

objects which their groſſer ſenſes do here intercept. There they may ſee the diſmal Cataſtrophe of their Comedies, the miſerable inverſion of all unlawful or unbounded pleſures: there that Prophetic menace concerning *Babylon* which we find *Rev.* 18. 7. will be literally verified upon every unhappy ſoul, *According as ſhe exalted her ſelf and lived delicately, ſo much the more tribulation give her*; the torment of that life will bear proportion to the pride and luxuries of this. It will therefore be neceſſary for thoſe who here wallow in pleſures, to confront to them the remembrance of thoſe rivers of Brimſtone, and ask themſelves the Prophets queſtion, *who can dwell with everlaſting burnings*? We find *Eſay*, when he denounces but temporal judgments againſt the daughters of *Zion*, he exactly purſues the Antitheſis, and to every part of their effeminate delicacy he oppoſes the direct contrary hardſhip, inſtead of *ſweet ſmells there ſhall be a ſtink, inſtead of a girdle a rent, inſtead of well ſet hair baldneſs, inſtead of a ſtomacher a girding with ſackcloth, and burning inſtead of beauty, Iſaiah* 3. 24.

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the deſires. He takes us off indeed from the fulſom pleſures of ſenſe, which by their groſſneſs may cloy, yet by reaſon of their emtineſs can never fill us; and brings us to taſte the more pure ſpiritual delights which are the true elixir of Pleſures, in compariſon whereof all the ſenſual are but as the dregs or feces in an extraction, after the ſpirits are drawn off. In like manner he calls us from our aſpiring to thoſe pinnacles of honor, where we alwaies ſit totteringly and often fall down, but yet invites us to ſoar higher, where we ſhall have the *moon* with her viciſſitudes and changes *under our feet*, *Rev.* 12. 1. and enjoy a grandeur as irreverſible as ſplendid.

Will teach to hallow the moſt unſanctified affections.

11. Thus do's he ſhew us a way to hallow our moſt unſanctified affections; thus, according to the Propheſie of *Zechariah, may holineſs be writ even upon the bells of the horſes*, *Zech.* 14. 20. upon our moſt brutal inclinations; and thus may all thoſe feminine Paſſions which now ſeduce women from Vertue, advance them in it. Let her that is amorous, place her love upon him who is (as the Spouſe tells us, *Cant.* 5. 10.) *the chiefeſt among ten thouſand*; ſhe that is angry, turn her edge againſt her ſins; ſhe that is haughty, diſdain the Devils drudgery; ſhe that is fearful, dread him who *can deſtroy both Body and Soul in Hell*, *Matth.* 5. 28. and ſhe that is ſad, reſerve her tears for her penitential offices. Thus may they conſecrate even their infirmities; and tho' they cannot Deifie, or erect Temples to them, as the Romans did to their Paſſions, nay their Diſeaſes; yet after they are thus cleanſed, they may ſacrifice them as the Jews did the clean Beaſts in the Tabernacle. Only Irreligion and Profaneſs is exemt from this Priviledg, no water of Purification can cleanſe it, or make it ſerviceable in the Temple; that, like the ſpoils of *Jericho*, is ſo execrable, that it muſt be devoted to deſtruction, as *an accurſed thing*, *Joſh.* 6. 17. For tho' God do not deſpiſe the work of his own hands, have ſo much kindneſs to his Creatures, that he endeavors to reduce all our native inclinations to their primitive rectitude, and therefore do's not aboliſh, but purifie them; yet Atheiſm is none of thoſe, 'tis a counterblaſt from hell, in oppoſition to that mighty wind, in which the holy Spirit deſcended. Tho' the ſubject in which it ſubſiſts may be reform'd, the perſon may turn Chriſtian, and the wit that maintain'd its blaſphemous paradoxes may be converted to holier uſes: yet the quality it ſelf is capable of no ſuch happy Metamorphoſis; that muſt be extirpated, for it cannot be made tributary. Which ſhews how tranſcendent an ill that is which cannot be converted to good, even that Omnipotence which can out of the very ſtones raiſe children to *Abraham*, attemts not any tranſmutation of this; which ought therefore to poſſeſs all hearts with a deteſtation of it, and to advance them in an earneſt purſuit of all the parts of Piety.

There is no wiſdom but in the fear of God.

12. And that is it which I would now once more (as a farewell exhortation) commend to my female Readers, as that which virtually contains all other accompliſhments; 'tis that pearl in the Goſpel for which they may part with all and make a good bargain too. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom*, ſaies the wiſeſt of men, *Prov.* 1. 7. and by his experience he ſhews that it is the compleating end of it too; for he no ſooner declin'd from that, but he grew to dotage and diſhonor. Let all thoſe therefore to whom God has diſpenſt an outward affluence, given them a viſible ſplendor in the eies of the World, be careful to ſecure to themſelves *that honor that comes from God only*, *John* 5. 44. unite their ſouls to that ſupreme Majeſty who is the fountain of true honor: who

in his beſtowing the Crown of Righteouſneſs proceeds by the ſame meſures by which he diſpoſes the Crown of *Iſrael*, when he avow'd to *Samuel* that he ***lookt not on the outward appearance but beheld the heart***, 1 *Sam.* 16. 7. If God ſee not his own image there, all the beauty and gaiety of the outward form is deſpicable in his eyes, like the apples of *Sodom* only a kind of painted duſt. But if Piety be firmly rooted there, they then become like the King's daughter all *glorious within* too; a much more valuable bravery than the *garment of needle-work and veſture of Gold*, *Pſal.* 45. 14. And this is it that muſt enter them into the King's *Palace*, into that *new Jeruſalem*, where they ſhall not wear, but inhabit *pearls* and Gems, *Rev.* 21. 19. be beautiful without the help of art or nature, by the mere reflection of the Divine brightneſs; be all that their then enlarg'd comprehenſions can wiſh, and infinitly more than they can here imagine.

FINIS.

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THE
Government
OF THE
TONGUE.

THE

PREFACE.

T*HE Government of the Tongue has ever bin juſtly reputed one of the moſt important parts of human Regiment. The Philoſopher and the Divine equally atteſt this: and* Solomon (*who was both*) *gives his Suffrage alſo; the perſwaſions to, and encomiums of it, taking up a conſiderable part of his book of Proverbs. I ſhall not therefore need to ſay any thing to juſtifie my choice of this ſubject, which has ſo much better Authorities to commend it. I rather wiſh that it had not the ſuperaddition of an accidental fitneſs grounded upon the univerſal neglect of it, it now ſeeming to be an art wholly outdated. For tho' ſome lineaments of it may be met with in books, yet there is ſcarce any footſteps of it in practice, where alone it can be ſignificant. The attemt therefore of reviving it I am ſure is ſeaſonable, I wiſh it were half as eaſy.*

2. *Indeed that skill was never very eaſy, it requiring the greateſt vigilance and caution, and therefore not to be attain'd by looſe trifling ſpirits. The Tongue is ſo ſlippery, that it eaſily deceives a drouſy or heedleſs guard. Nature ſeems to have given it ſome unhappy advantages towards that. 'Tis in its frame the moſt ready for motion of any member; needs not ſo much as the flexure of a joint, and by acceſs of humors acquires a glibneſs too, the more to facilitate its moving. And alas we too much find the effect of this its eaſy frame; it often goes without giving us warning; and as children when they happen upon a rolling engine, can ſet it in ſuch a carriere, as wiſer people cannot on a ſudden ſtop: ſo the childiſh parts of us, our paſſions, our fancies, all our mere animal faculties, can thruſt our tongues into ſuch diſorders, as our reaſon cannot eaſily rectify. The due managery of this unruly member, may rightly be eſteem'd one of the greateſt myſteries of Wiſdom and Vertue. This is intimated by St.* James, if any man offend not in word, the ſame is a perfect man, and able alſo to bridle the whole body, James 3. 2. *'Tis ſtoried of* Bembo *a primitive Chriſtian, that coming to a friend to teach him a Pſalm, he began to him the thirty ninth,* I ſaid I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my Tongue; *upon hearing of which firſt verſe, he ſtopt his Tutor, ſaying, This is enough for me, if I learn it as I ought; and being after ſix months rebuk'd for not coming again, he reply'd, that he had not learnt his firſt leſſon: nay after nineteen years he profeſt, that in that time he had ſcarce learnt to fulfil that one line. I give not this inſtance to diſcourage, but rather to quicken men to the ſtudy; for a leſſon that requires ſo much time to learn, had need be early begun with.*

3. *But eſpecially in this age, wherein the contrary liberty has got ſuch a prepoſſeſſion, that men look on it as a part of their birth-right; nay do not only let their tongue looſe, but ſtudiouſly ſuggeſt inordinancies to them, and uſe the ſpur where they ſhould the Bridle. By this means converſation is ſo generally corrupted, that many have had cauſe to wiſh they had not bin made ſociable creatures. A man ſecluded from company can have but the Devil and himſelf to temt him: but he that converſes, has almoſt*

as many ſnares as he has companions Men barter vice, and as if each had not enough of his own growth, tranſplant out of his neighbors ſoil, and that which was intended to cultivate and civilize the world, has turned it into a wild deſert and wilderneſs.

4. *This face of things I confeſs looks not very promiſing to one who is to ſolicit a reformation. But whatever the hopes are, I am ſure the needs are great enough to juſtify the attemts: for as the diſeaſe is Epidemic, ſo it is mortal alſo, utterly inconſiſtent with that pure religion, which leads to life. We may take St.* James's *word for it,* If any man ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that mans religion is vain, James 1.26. *God knows we have not much Religion among us: 'tis great pity we ſhould fruſtrate the little we have, render that utterly inſignificant, which at the beſt amounts to ſo little. Let therefore the difficulty and neceſſity of the task, prevail with us to take time before us, not to defer this ſo neceſſary a work 'till the night come; or imagine that the Tongue will be able to expiate its whole age of guilt by a feeble* Lord have mercy on me *at the laſt. Tho' indeed if that were ſuppoſeable, 'twere but a broken reed to truſt to, none knowing whether he ſhall have time or grace for that. He may be ſurprized with an Oath, a Blaſphemy, a Detraction in his mouth: many have bin ſo. 'Tis ſure there muſt be a dying moment: and how can any man ſecure himſelf, it ſhall not be the ſame with that in which he utters thoſe, and his expiring breath be ſo employ'd? Sure they cannot think that thoſe incantations (tho' helliſh enough) can make them ſhot-free, render them invulnerable to deaths darts: and if they have not that or ſome other as ridiculous reſerves, 'tis ſtrange what ſhould make them run ſuch a mad adventure.*

5. *But I expect it ſhould be objected, that this little deſpicable Tract is not proportionable to the encounter to which it is brought; that beſides the unskilful managing of thoſe points it do's touch, it wholly omits many proper to the ſubject, there being faults of the Tongue which it paſſes in ſilence. I confeſs there is colour enough for this objection. But I believe if it were put to votes, more would reſolve I had ſaid too much, rather than too little. Should I have enlarged to the utmoſt compaſs of this theme, I ſhould have made the Volume of ſo affrighting a bulk, that few would have attemted it; and by ſaying much I ſhould have ſaid nothing at all to thoſe who moſt need it. Mens ſtomachs are generally ſo queaſie in theſe caſes, that 'tis not ſafe to overload them; let them try how they can digeſt this: if they can ſo as to turn it into kindly nouriſhment, they will be able to ſupply themſelves with the remainder. For I think I may with ſome confidence affirm, that he that can confine his tongue within the limits here preſcrib'd, may without much difficulty reſtrain its other excurſions. All I ſhall beg of the Reader, is but to come with ſincere intentions and then perhaps thoſe few* Stones *and* Sling *uſed in the Name, and with invocation of the* Lord of Hoſts, *may countervail the maſſive armor of the* Uncircumciſed Philiſtin; *And may that God who loves to magnifie his power in weakneſs, give it the like ſucceſs.*

THE Government OF THE TONGUE.

Sect. I.

Of the Uſe of Speech.

1. MAN at his firſt creation was ſubſtituted by God as his Vicegerent, to receive the homage, and enjoy the ſervices of all inferior beings: nay farther was endowed with excellencies fit to maintain the port of ſo vaſt an Empire. Yet thoſe very excellencies, as they qualified him for dominion, ſo they unfitted him for a ſatisfaction or acquieſcence in thoſe his vaſſals: the dignity of his nature ſet him above the ſociety or converſe of meer animals: ſo that in all the pomp of his roialty, amidſt all the throng and variety of creatures, he ſtill remain'd ſolitary. But God who knew what an appetite of ſociety he had implanted in him, judged this no agreeable ſtate for him, *It is not meet that man ſhould be alone*, *Gen.* 2. 18. And as in the univerſal frame of nature, he ingraffed ſuch an abhorrence of vacuity, that all creatures do rather ſubmit to a preternatural motion than admit it; ſo in this emty, this deſtitute condition of man, he relieved him by a miraculous expedient, divided him that he might unite him, and made one part of him an aſſociate for the other.

Man in paradiſe could not be happy without converſation.

2. Neither did God take this care to provide him a companion, merely for the entercourſes of Senſe; had that bin the ſole aim, there needed no new productions, there were ſenſitive creatures enough: the deſign was to entertain his nobler principle, his Reaſon, with a more equal converſe, aſſign him an intimate, whoſe intellect as much correſponded with his, as did the outward form, whoſe heart, according to *Solomon*'s reſemblance, anſwered his, *As in water face anſwers face*, *Prov.* 27. 19. with whom he might communicate minds, traffic and enterchange all the notions and ſentiments of a reaſonable ſoul.

Such a commerce as would entertain the rational faculties.

3. But tho' there were this ſympathy in their ſublimer part which diſpoſed them to the moſt intimate union; yet there was a cloud of fleſh in the way which intercepted their mutual view, nay permitted no intelligence between them, other than by the mediation of ſome Organ equally commenſurate to ſoul and body. And to this purpoſe the infinite

Make the mind viſible to others.

wiſdom of God ordain'd Speech; which as it is a ſound reſulting from the modulation of the Air, has moſt affinity to the Spirit, but as it is uttered by the Tongue, has immediat cognation with the body, and ſo the fitteſt inſtrument to manage a commerce between the rational yet inviſible powers of human ſouls clothed in fleſh.

Hence we derive all the advantages of Society.

4. And as we have reaſon to admire the excellency of this contrivance, ſo have we to applaud the extenſiveneſs of the benefit. From this it is we derive all the advantages of ſociety: without this men of the neareſt neighbourhood would have ſignified no more to each other than our *Antipodes* now do to us. All our arts and ſciences for the accommodation of this life, had remain'd only a rude Chaos in their firſt matter, had not ſpeech by a mutual comparing of notions ranged them into order. By this it is we can give one another notice of our wants, and ſolicit relief; by this we interchangably communicate advices, reproofs, conſolations, all the neceſſary aids of human imbecillity. This is that which poſſeſſes us of the moſt valuable bleſſing of human life, I mean Friendſhip, which could no more have bin contracted amongſt dumb men, than it can between pictures and ſtatues. Nay farther to this we owe in a great degree the intereſts even of our Spiritual being, all the oral, yea and written revelations too of God's will: for had there bin no language, there had bin no writing. And tho' we muſt not pronounce how far God might have evidenced himſelf to mankind by immediat inſpiration of every individual, yet we may ſafely reſt in the Apoſtles inference *Rom.* 10. 14. *How ſhall they believe in him whom they have not heard, and how ſhall they hear without a Preacher?*

A farther excellence of Speech is its ſubſervience to the praiſing God.

5. From all theſe excellent uſes of it in reſpect of man, we may collect another in relation to God, that is, the *praiſing* and *magnifying* his goodneſs, as for all other effects of his bounty, ſo particularly that he hath given us language, and all the conſequent advantages of it. This is the juſt inference of the Son of *Sirach Ecclus.* 51. 22. *The Lord hath given me a tongue, and I will praiſe him therewith.* This is the ſacrifice which God calls for ſo often by the Prophets, *the Calves of our lips*, which anſwers to all *the oblations out of the herd*, and which the Apoſtle makes equivalent to thoſe of the *floor* and *wine-preſs* alſo. *Heb.* 13. 15. *The fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.* To this we frequently find the Pſalmiſt exciting both himſelf and others, *Awake up my glory, I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the people, and I will ſing unto thee among the nations, Pſal.* 57. 9, 10. And, *O praiſe the Lord with me, and let us magnify his name together, Pſal.* 34. 3. And indeed whoever obſerves that excellent magazine of Devotion, the book of Pſalms, ſhall find that the *Lauds* make up a very great part of it.

Which is the beſt touchſtone by which to try our Speech.

9. By what hath been ſaid, we may define what are the grand Uſes of ſpeech, *viz.* the glorifying of God, and the benefiting of men. And this helps us to an infallible teſt by which to try our words. For ſince every thing is ſo far approvable as it anſwers the end of its being, what part ſoever of our diſcourſes agrees not with the primitive end of ſpeech, will not hold weight in the balance of the ſanctuary. It will therefore nearly concern us to enter upon this ſcrutiny, to bring our words to this touch-ſtone: for tho' in our depraved eſtimate the Eloquence of Language is more regarded than the Innocence, tho' we think our words vaniſh with the breath that utters them, yet they become records in God's Court, are laid up in his Archives as witneſſes either for, or againſt us; for he who is truth it ſelf hath told us, that *By thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemn'd, Mat.* 12. 37.

SECT. II.

Of the manifold Abuſe of Speech.

1. AND now ſince the original deſigns of ſpeaking are ſo noble, ſo advantageous, one would be apt to conclude no rational creature would be temted to pervert them, ſince 'tis ſure he can ſubſtitute none for them, that can equally conduce, either to his honor, or intereſt.

The abuſes of Speech, are as great as its uſe.

2. Yet experience (that great baffler of ſpeculation) aſſures us the thing is too poſſible, and brings in all ages matter of fact to confute our ſuppoſitions: ſo liable alaſs is ſpeech to be depraved, that the Scripture deſcribes it as the ſource of all our other depravation. Original ſin came firſt out at the mouth by ſpeaking before it entred in by eating. The firſt uſe we find *Eve* to have made of language, was to enter parley with the temter, and from that to become a temter to her husband. And immediatly upon the fall, guilty *Adam* frames his tongue to a frivolous excuſe which was much leſs able to cover his ſin than the fig-leaves his nakedneſs. And as in the infancy of the firſt world, the tongue had licked up the venom of the old ſerpent, ſo neither could the Deluge waſh it off in the ſecond. No ſooner was that ſmall colony (wherewith the depopulated earth was to be replanted) come forth of the Ark, but we meet with *Cham* a delator to his own father, inviting his brethren to that execrable ſpectacle of their parents nakedneſs.

Original ſin came firſt out of the mouth by ſpeaking, before it entred in by eating.

3. Nor did this only run in the blood of that accurſed *Cham*; the holy ſeed was not totally free from its infection, even the Patriarchs themſelves were not exemt. *Abraham* uſed a repeted colluſion in the caſe of his wife, and expos'd his own integrity to preſerve her chaſtity. *Iſaac* the heir of his bleſſing, was ſon of his infirmity alſo, and acted over the ſame ſcene upon *Rebecca*'s account. *Jacob* obtain'd his fathers bleſſing by a flat lie. *Simeon* and *Levi* ſpake not only falſly, but inſidiouſly, nay hypocritically, abuſing at once their proſelytes and their religion, for the effecting their cruel deſigns upon the *Sichemites*. *Moſes* tho' a man of an unparallel'd meekneſs, yet *ſpake unadviſedly with his lips*, *Pſalm* 106. 33. *David* uttered a bloody vow againſt *Nabal*, ſpake *words ſmoother than oil* to *Uriah*, when he had done him one injury, and deſign'd him another. 'Twere endleſs to reckon up thoſe ſeveral inſtances, the old Teſtament gives us of theſe lapſes of the tongue: neither want there divers in the new; tho' there is one of ſo much horror, as ſuperſedes the naming more, I mean that of St. *Peter* in his reiterated abjuring his Lord, a crime which (abſtracted from the intention) ſeems worſe than that of *Judas*: that traitor own'd his relation, cried *Maſter Maſter* even when he betraied him, ſo that had he bin meſured only by his tongue, he might have paſt for the better diſciple.

The holy Patriarchs were not exemt from failing herein.

4. Theſe are ſad inſtances, not recorded to patronize the ſin, but to excite our caution. It was a politic inference of the Elders of Iſrael in the caſe of *Jehu*; *Behold two Kings ſtood not before him, how then ſhall we ſtand? Kings* 10. 4. And we may well apply it to this; if perſons of ſo circumſpect a piety, have bin thus overtaken, what ſecurity can there be

Which ought to be matter of caution againſt ſo prevailing a danger.

be for our wretchleſs oſcitancy? If thoſe who *kept* their *mouths as it were with a bridle*, *Pſalm* 39. 2. could not alwaies preſerve them innocent, to what guilt may not our unreſtrain'd licentious tongues hurry us? Thoſe which as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaketh, *Pſalm* 73. *go thro' the world*, are in that unbounded range very likely to meet with him who walks the ſame round, *Job.* 2. and by him be tuned and ſet to his key, be ſcrued and wreſted from their proper uſe, and made ſubſervient to his vileſt deſigns.

The depravation of Speech appears in all parts of human life.

5. And would God this were only a probable ſuppoſition! but alas experience ſupplants the uſe of conjecture in the point: we do not only preſume it may be ſo, but actually find it is ſo. For amidſt the univerſal depravation of our faculties, there is none more notorious than that of ſpeech. Whither ſhall we turn us to find it in its priſtine integrity? amidſt that infinity of words in which we exhauſt our breath, how few are there which do at all correſpond with the original deſignation of ſpeech; nay which do not flatly contradict it? To what unholy, uncharitable purpoſes is that uſeful faculty perverted? That which was meant to ſerve as the perfume of the Tabernacle, to ſend up the incenſes of praiſes and praiers, now exhales in impious vapors, to eclipſe if it were poſſible the Father of light. That which ſhould be the ſtore-houſe of relief and refreſhment to our brethren, is become a magazine of all offenſive weapons againſt them, *ſpears and arrows and ſharp ſwords*, as the Pſalmiſt often phraſes them. We do not only fall by the ſlipperineſs of our tongues, but we deliberately diſcipline and train them to miſchief. *We bend our tongues as our bows for lies*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Jer.* 9. 3. And in a word, what God affirm'd of the old world in relation to thoughts, is too applicable to our words, they *are evil and that continually*, *Gen.* 6. 5. and that which was intended for the inſtrument, the aid of human ſociety, is become the diſturber, the peſt of it.

The running over all particulars being an endleſs task, 'twill be enough to point at the moſt remarkable.

6. I ſhall not attempt a particular diſcuſſion of all the vices of the tongue: it doth indeed paſs all Geography to draw an exact Map of that *world of iniquity*, as St. *James* calls it. I ſhall only draw the greater lines, and diſtribute it into its principal and more eminent parts, which are diſtinguiſhable as they relate to God, our Neighbor, and our Selves; in each of which I ſhall rather make an eſſay by way of inſtance, than attemt an exact enumeration or ſurvey.

SECT. III.

Of Atheiſtical Diſcourſe.

The tongue tho' a deſpicable member, is ſo daring as to make war with heaven.

1. I Begin with thoſe which relate to God, this poor deſpicable member the tongue being of ſuch a gigantic inſolence tho' not ſize, as even to make war with heaven. 'Tis true every diſorder'd ſpeech doth remotely ſo, as it is a violation of God's law; but I now ſpeak only of thoſe which as it were attaque his perſon, and immediately fly in the face of Omnipotency. In the higheſt rank of theſe we may well place all Atheiſtical Diſcourſe, which is that bold ſort of rebellion, which ſtrikes not only at his Authority, but himſelf. Other blaſpemies level ſome at one Attribute, ſome another; but this by a more compendious impiety, ſhoots at his very being, and as if it ſcorn'd thoſe piece-meal

guilts, ſets up a ſingle monſter big enough to devour them all: for all inferior prophaneſs is as much outdared by Atheiſm, as is Religion it ſelf.

An attemt ſcarce known in the heathen world.

2. Time was when the inveighing againſt this, would have bin thought a very impertinent ſubject in a Chriſtian nation, and men would have replied upon me as the *Spartan* Lady did, when ſhe was asked what was the puniſhment for adultereſſes, *There are no ſuch things here.* Nay even amongſt the moſt barbarous people, it could have concern'd but ſome few ſingle perſons; no numbers, much leſs ſocieties of men, having ever excluded the belief of a Deity. And perhaps it may at this day concern them as little as ever; for amidſt the various Deities and worſhips of thoſe remoter nations, we have yet no account of any that renounc'd all. 'Tis only our light hath ſo blinded us: ſo that God may upbraid us as he did Iſrael, *Hath a nation changed their gods which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit, Iſa.* 2. 11. This madneſs is now the incloſure, the peculiarity of thoſe, who by their names and inſtitution ſhould be Chriſtians: as if that natural Aphoriſm, *That when things are at the height they muſt fall again,* had place here alſo, and our being of the moſt excellent, moſt elevated religion, were but the preparative to our being of none.

With us 'tis grown reputable.

3. 'Tis indeed deplorable to ſee, how the profeſſors of no God begin to vie numbers with all the differing perſwaſions in religion, ſo that Atheiſm ſeems to be the gulph that finally ſwallows up all our ſects. It has ſtruck on a ſudden into ſuch a reputation, that it ſcorns any longer to ſculk, but own's it ſelf more publickly than moſt men dare do the contrary. 'Tis ſet down in the ſeat of the ſcorner, and ſince it cannot argue, reſolves to laugh all Piety out of countenance, and having ſeized the mint, nothing ſhall paſs for wit that hath not his ſtamp, and with it there is no mettle of ſo baſe an alloy, but ſhall go current. Every the dulleſt creature that can but ſtoutly diſclaim his maker, has by it ſufficiently ſecur'd its title to ingenuity; and ſuch meſures being once eſtabliſh'd, no wonder at its ſholes of proſelytes, when it gives on the one hand licence to all ſenſual inordinances, permits them to be as much beaſts as they will, or can, and yet tells them on the other, that they are the more men for it. Sure 'tis not ſtrange that a hook thus doubly baited ſhould catch many. Either of thoſe allurements ſingle, we ſee has force enough. The charms of ſenſuality are ſo faſcinating, that even thoſe who believe another world, and the ſevere revenges that will there attend their luxuries, yet chuſe to take them in preſent with all their diſmal reverſions. And then ſure it cannot but be very good news to ſuch a one to be told, that that after-reckoning is but a falſe alarm, and his great willingneſs to have it true, will eaſily incline him to believe it is ſo. And doubtleſs were Atheiſm traced up to its firſt cauſes, this would be found the moſt operative; 'tis ſo convenient for a man that will have no God to controul or to reſtrain him, to have none to puniſh him neither, that that utility paſſes into argument, and he will rather put a cheat upon his underſtanding by concluding, there is no future account, than ſuch a ſting in his pleſures, as the remembrance of it muſt needs prove. This ſeems to be the original and firſt riſe of this impiety, it being impoſſible for any man that ſees the whole, nay but the ſmalleſt part of the Univerſe, to doubt of a firſt and ſupreme Being, until from the conſciouſneſs of his provocations, it become his intereſt there ſhould be none.

Upon the pretence to wit and reaſon.

4. This is indeed, conſidering the depravation of the world, a pretty faſt tenure for Atheiſm to hold by; yet it has of late twiſted its cord, and got that other ſtring to its bow we before mention'd. Its bold monopolizing of wit and reaſon compels, as the other invited men. This we may indeed call the devils preſs, by which he hath fill'd up his troops: men are afraid of being reproch'd for ſilly and irrational, in giving themſelves up to a blind belief of what they do not ſee. And this bugbear frights them from their religion; reſolving they will be no *fools for Chriſt's ſake*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 13. I dare appeal to the breaſts of many in this age, whether this have not bin one of the moſt prevalent temtations with them to eſpouſe the tenet: and tho' perhaps they at firſt took it up, only in their own defence, for fear of being thought fools, yet that fear ſoon converts into ambition of being thought wits. They do not ſatisfy themſelves with deſerting their religion, unleſs they revile it alſo; remembring how themſelves were laught out of it, they eſſay to do the like by others. Yea ſo zealous propugners are they of their negative Creed, that they are importunately diligent to inſtruct men in it, and in all the little ſophiſtries and colors for defending it: ſo that he that would meſure the opinions by their induſtry, and the remiſsneſs of believers, would certainly think that the great intereſt of Eternity lay wholly on their ſide. Yet I take not this for any argument of the confidence of this perſwaſion, but the contrary: for we know they are not the ſecure, but the deſperate undertakings, wherein men are moſt deſirous of partners, and there is ſomwhat of horror in an uncouth way, which makes men unwilling to travel it alone.

With which tho' the pretenders would bear down others, they cannot convince themſelves.

5. The truth is, tho' they ſpeak big, and preſcribe as poſitively to their pupils, as if they had ſome counter revelation to confute thoſe of *Moſes* and *Chriſt*, yet were their ſecret thoughts laid open, there would ſcarce be found the like aſſurance there. I will not ſay to what reprobate ſenſe ſome particular perſons have provoked God to deliver them, but in the generality, I believe one may affirm, that there is ſeldom an infidelity ſo ſanguine as to exclude all fears. Their moſt bold Theſis, That there is no God, no judgment, no hell, is often met with an inward tremulous Hypotheſis, What if there be? I dare in this remit me to themſelves, and challenge (not their conſciences, who profeſs to have none, but) their natural ingenuity to ſay, whether they have not ſomtimes ſuch damps and ſhiverings within them. If they ſhall ſay, that theſe are but the reliques of prepoſſeſſion and education, which their reaſon ſoon diſſipates; let me then ask them farther, whether they would not give a conſiderable ſum to be infallibly aſcertain'd there were no ſuch things: now no ſenſible man would give a farthing to be ſecur'd from a thing which his reaſon tells him is impoſſible; therefore if they would give any thing (as I dare ſay they cannot deny to themſelves that they would) 'tis a true demonſtration that they are not ſo ſure as they pretend to be.

A ſtrange diſingenuity and madneſs to embrace a profeſſion their hearts diſown; and if falſe, will lead to inevitable ruin.

6. I might here join iſſue upon the whole, and preſs them with the unreaſonableneſs, the diſingenuouſneſs of embracing a profeſſion to which their own hearts have an inward reluctance, nay the imprudence of governing their lives by that poſition, which for ought they know may be (nay they actually fear is) falſe, and if it be, muſt inevitably immerſe them in endleſs ruin. But I muſt remember my deſign limits me only to the faults of the Tongue, and therefore I muſt not follow this chaſe beyond thoſe bounds. I ſhall only extend it to my proper ſubject, that of Atheiſtical talk, wherein they make as mad an adventure as in any

other of their enormous practices, nay perhaps in ſome reſpects a worſe.

The provocation of words is as great, nay may be greater than that of deeds.

7. In the firſt place 'tis to be conſider'd, that if there be a God, he, as well as men, may be provok'd by our words as well as deeds. Secondly 'tis poſſible he may be more. Our ill deeds may be don upon a vehement impulſe of temtation; ſome profit or pleſures may tranſport and hurry us; and they may at leaſt have this alleviation, that we did them to pleaſe or advantage our ſelves, not to ſpight God. But Atheiſtical words cannot be ſo palliated: they are arrows directly ſhot againſt heaven, and can come out of no quiver but malice; for 'tis certain there never was man that ſaid, There was no God, but he wiſh'd it firſt. We know what enhancement our injuries to each other receive from their being malicious: and ſure they will do ſo much more to God, whoſe principal demand from us is, that we give him our heart. But thirdly this implieth a malice of the higheſt ſort. Human ſpight is uſually confin'd within ſome bounds, aims ſomtimes at the goods, ſomtimes at the fame, at moſt but at the life of our neighbor: but here is an accumulation of all thoſe, back'd with the moſt prodigious inſolence. 'Tis God only that hath power of annihilation, and we (vile worms) ſeek here to ſteal that incommunicable right, and retort it upon himſelf, and by an anticreative power would unmake him who has made us. Nay laſtly, by this we have not only the utmoſt guilt of ſingle rebels, but we become ringleaders alſo, draw in others to that accurſed aſſociation: for 'tis only this liberty of diſcourſe that hath propagated Atheiſm. The Devil might perhaps by inward ſuggeſtions have drawn in here and there a ſingle Proſelyte; but he could never have had ſuch numbers, had he not uſed ſome as decoies to enſnare others.

It has no advantage to balance the danger.

8. And now let the briſk Atheiſt a little conſider, what theſe aggravations will amount to. 'Twas good counſel was given to the *Athenians*, to be very ſure *Philip* was dead, before they expreſt joy at his death, leſt they might find him alive to revenge that haſty triumph. And the like I may give to theſe men, Let them be very ſure there is no God, before they preſume thus to defie him, leſt they find him at laſt aſſert his being in their deſtruction. Certainly nothing leſs than a demonſtration can juſtify the reaſonableneſs of ſuch a daring. And when they can produce that, they have ſo far outgon all the comprehenſions of mankind, they may well challenge the liberty of the Tongue, and ſay, *They are their own, who is Lord over them, Pſalm* 12. 4.

The utmoſt gain, is vain applauſe.

9. But till this be done, 'twere well they would ſoberly balance the hazards of this liberty with the gains of it. The hazards are of the moſt dreadful kind, the gains of the ſlighteſt: the moſt is but a vain applauſe of wit for an impious jeſt; or of reaſon, for a deep conſiderer: and yet even for that they muſt incroach on the Devils right too, who is commonly the promter, and therefore if there be any credit in it, may juſtly challenge it. Indeed 'tis to be fear'd he will prove at laſt the maſter wit, when as for thoſe little loans he makes them, he gets their ſouls in morgage. Would God they would conſider betimes, what a woful raillery that will be, which for ought they know may end in *gnaſhing of teeth.*

Swearing, is a remarkable part of Atheiſtical diſcourſe.

10. The next impiety of the Tongue is Swearing, that fooliſh ſin which plaies the Platonic to damnation, and courts it purely for its ſelf, without any of the appendant allurements which other ſins have: a vice which for its guilt may juſtify the ſharpeſt; and for its cuſtomarineſs, the frequenteſt invectives which can be made againſt it: but it has bin aſſaulted ſo often by better pens, and has ſhewed it ſelf ſo much proof againſt all

Homily, that it is as needleſs as diſcouraging a task for me to attemt it. 'Tis indeed a thing taken up ſo perfectly without all ſenſe, that 'tis the leſs wonder to find it maintain it ſelf upon the ſame principle 'tis founded, and continue in the ſame defiance to reaſon wherein it began.

Which is ſtrangely twiſted with Atheiſm by which in reaſon it ſhould be ſuperſeded.

11. All therefore that I ſhall ſay concerning it, is to expreſs my wonder how it has made a ſhift to twiſt it ſelf with the former ſin of Atheiſm, by which according to all rules of reaſoning it ſeems to be ſuperſeded: and yet we ſee none own God more in their oaths, than thoſe that diſavow him in their other diſcourſe: nay ſuch men ſwear not only to ſwell their language, and make it ſound more full and bluſtring, but even when they moſt deſire to be believ'd. What an abſurdity of wickedneſs is this? Is there a God to ſwear by, and is there none to believe in, none to pray to? We call it frenzy to ſee a man fight with a ſhadow: but ſure 'tis more ſo, to invoke it. Why then do theſe men of reaſon make ſuch ſolemn appeals (for ſuch every oath is) to a mere Chimera and Phantaſm? It would make one think they had ſome inward belief of a Deity, which they upon ſurprizal thus blurt out: if it argue not this, it do's ſomthing worſe, and becomes an evidence how much the appearance of a ſin recommends it to them, that they thus catch at it, without examining how it will conſiſt with another they like better. Theſe are indeed wholeſale chapmen to Satan, that do not truck and barter one crime for another, but take the whole herd: and tho' by reaſon of their diſagreeing kinds they are apt to gore and worry each other, yet he ſtill keeps up his old policy, and will not let one Devil caſt out another. A league ſhall be made between the moſt diſcordant ſins, and there ſhall be a God, or there ſhall be none, according as opportunity ſerves to provoke him: ſo aſſuming to himſelf a power which even Omnipotence diſclaims, the reconciling contradictions. And he ſucceeds in it as far as his concern reaches: for tho' he cannot ſolve the repugnancies in reaſon, yet as long as he can unite the ſins in mens practice, he has his deſign; nay has at once the gain and the ſport of fooling theſe great pretenders to ratiocination.

Another ſort is profanation of Holy Scripture.

12. A third ſort of impious diſcourſe there is, which yet is bottom'd on the moſt ſacred, I mean thoſe profane paraphraſes, that are uſually made upon the holy Text, many making it the ſubject of their cavils, and others of their mirth. Some do it out of the former Atheiſtical principle, and I cannot but confeſs they act conſonantly to themſelves in it; for 'tis but a needful artifice for men to diſparage thoſe teſtimonies, which they fear may be brought againſt them. But there are others who not only profeſs a God, but alſo own the ſacred Scripture for his word, and yet uſe it as courſly as the others. And theſe, I confeſs, are riddles of profaneſs, that hang, as ſome have pictured *Solomon*, between heaven and hell, borrow the Chriſtians faith, and the Atheiſts drollery upon it: and 'tis hard to ſay in which they are more in earneſt. It is indeed ſcandalous to ſee, to what deſpicable uſes thoſe holy Oracles are put: ſuch as ſhould a Heathen obſerve, he would little ſuſpect them to be own'd by us as a rule of our religion, and could never think they were ever meant for any thing beyond a whetſtone for wit. One tries his Logic upon them, and objects to the ſenſe, another his Rhetoric, and quarrels at the phraſe, a third his contrivance, and thinks he could have woven it with a better contexture: never conſidering, that unleſs they could confute the Divinity of their original, all theſe accuſations are nothing elſe but direct blaſphemy, the making God *ſuch a one as themſelves,*

Pſalm. 50. 21. and charging him with thoſe defects which are indeed their own. They want learning or induſtry to ſound the depth of thoſe ſacred treſures, and therefore they decry the Scripture as mean and poor, and to juſtify their own wiſdom, diſpute Gods. This is as if the mole ſhould complain the ſun is dark, becauſe he dwells under ground, and ſees not his ſplendor. Men are indeed in all inſtances apt to ſpeak ill of the things they underſtand not, but in none more than this. Their ignorance of local cuſtoms, Idioms of language, and ſeveral other circumſtances, renders them incompetent judges, (as hath bin excellently evinc'd by a late Author). 'Twill therefore befit them, either to qualify themſelves better, or to ſpare their Criticiſms. But upon the whole, I think I may challenge any ingenious man, to produce any writing of that antiquity, whoſe phraſe and genius is ſo accommodated to all ſucceſſions of ages. Stiles and waies of addreſs we know grow obſolete, and are almoſt antiquated as garments: and yet after ſo long a tract of time, the Scripture muſt (by conſidering men) be confeſt to ſpeak not only properly, but often politely and elegantly to the preſent age: a great argument that it is the dictate of him that is, *The ſame yeſterday, to day and for ever, Heb.* 13. 7.

Of which not only the malicious detractors, but ludicrous jeſters are guilty.

13. But beſides theſe more ſolemn traducers, there are a lighter ludicrous ſort of profaners, who uſe the Scripture as they do odd ends of plaies, to furniſh out their jeſts; cloath all their little impertinent conceits in its language, and debaſe it by the mixture of ſuch miſerable trifles, as themſelves would be aſhamed of, were they not heightned and inſpirited by that profaneſs. A Bible phraſe ſerves them in diſcourſe, as the haut gouſt do's in diet, to give a reliſh to the moſt inſipid ſtuff. And were it not for this magazine, a great many mens raillery would want ſupplies: for there are divers who make a great noiſe of wit, that would be very mute if this one Topic were barr'd them. And indeed it ſeems a tacit confeſſion, that they have little of their own, when they are fain thus to commit ſacriledg to drive on the trade. But ſure 'tis a pitiful pretence to ingenuity that can be thus kept up, there being little need of any other faculty but memory to be able to cap Texts. I am ſure ſuch repetitions out of other books would be thought pedantic and ſilly. How ridiculous would a man be, that ſhould alwaies interlard his diſcourſe with fragments of *Horace*, or *Virgil*, or the Aphoriſms of *Pythagoras*, or *Seneca*? Now 'tis too evident, that it is not from any ſuperlative eſteem of ſacred Writ, that it is ſo often quoted: and why ſhould it then be thought a ſpecimen of wit to do it there, when 'tis folly in other inſtances? The truth is, 'tis ſo much the reſerve of thoſe who can give no better teſtimony of their parts, that methinks upon that very ſcore it ſhould be given over by thoſe that can. And ſure were it poſſible for any thing that is ſo bad to grow unfaſhionable, the world has had enough of this to be cloied with it: but how fond ſoever men are of this divertiſement, 'twill finally prove that *mirth Solomon* ſpeaks of, which *ends in heavineſs, Prov.* 14. 13. for certainly whether we eſtimate it according to human or Divine meſures, it muſt be a high provocation of God.

Such uſage we ſhould not bear, in any writings of our own.

14. Let any of us but put the caſe in our own perſons: Suppoſe we had written to a friend, to advertiſe him of things of the greateſt importance to himſelf, had given him ample and exact inſtructions, back'd them with earneſt exhortations and conjurings not to neglect his own concern, and laſtly enforc'd all with the moſt moving expreſſions of kindneſs and tenderneſs to him: ſuppoſe, I ſay, that after all this, the next

news we ſhould hear of that letter, were to have it put in doggrel rime, to be made ſport for the rabble, or at beſt have the moſt eminent phraſes of it pickt out and made a common by-word: I would fain know how any of us would reſent ſuch a mixture of ingratitude and contumely. I think I need make no minute application. The whole deſign of the Bible do's ſufficiently anſwer, nay outgo the firſt part of the parallel, and God knows our vile uſage of it do's too much (I fear too literally) adapt the latter. And if we think the affront too baſe for one of us, can we believe God will take it in good part? That were to make him not only more ſtupid than any man, but as much ſo as the heathen Idols, that have *eies and ſee not, Pſalm* 115. 5. And 'tis ſure the higheſt madneſs in the world, for any man that believes that there is a God, to imagine he will finally ſit down by ſuch uſage.

The Heathen Oracles found a more civil treatment. So alſo the Moſaic Law.

15. But if we weigh it in the ſcale of Religion, the crime will yet appear more heinous. Mere natural Piety has taught men to receive the Reſponſes of their Gods with all poſſible veneration. What applications had the Delphic Oracle from all parts, and from all ranks of men? What confidence had they in its prediction, and what obedience did they pay to its advice? If we look next into the Moſaical œconomy, we ſhall ſee with what dreadful Solemnities that Law was promulged, what an awful reverence was paid to the mount whence it iſſued, how it was fenced from any rude intruſions either of men or beaſts: and after it was written in tables, all the whole equipage of the Tabernacle, was deſign'd only for its more decent repoſitory, the Ark it ſelf receiving its value only from what it had in cuſtody. Yea ſuch a hallowed influence had it, as transfuſed a relative ſanctity even to the meaneſt utenſils, none of which were after to be put to common uſes: the very perfume was ſo peculiar and ſacred, that it was a capital crime to imitate the compoſition. Afterwards when more of the divine revelations was committed to writing, the Jews were ſuch ſcrupulous reverers of it, that 'twas the buſineſs of the Maſorites, to number not only the ſections and lines, but even the words and letters of the old Teſtament, that by that exact calculation they might the better ſecure it from any ſurreptitious practices.

Yet a higher reſpect is due to the Goſpel.

16. And ſure the New Teſtament is not of leſs concern than the Old: nay the Apoſtle aſſerts it to be of far greater, and which we ſhall be more accountable for, *For if the word ſpoken by Angels were ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience receiv'd a juſt recompence, how ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great Salvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken to us by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him? Heb.* 2. 23. And it is in another place the inference of the ſame Apoſtle, from the excellency of the Goſpel above the law, that we ſhould *ſerve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, Heb.* 12. 28. And certainly 'tis but an ill eſſay of that reverence and godly fear, to uſe that very Goſpel ſo irreverently and ungodlily as men now do. If we paſs from the Apoſtle to the next ſucceeding ages of the Church, we find the Primitive Chriſtians lookt on their Bibles as their moſt important treſure. Such was the outward reſpect they paid to them (of which the ſtanding up at the reading of the Goſpel, ſtill in uſe among us, is a faint memorial) that the heathen perſecutors made it one part of their examination of the Chriſtians brought to their tribunals, *What thoſe books were which they adored while they read them?* Such was their intimate eſteem, that they expoſed all things elſe to the rapine of their enemies, ſo they might ſecure thoſe volumes. Nor was this only an heroic piece of zeal in ſome, but indiſpen-

ſably required of all: inſomuch that when in the heat of perſecution, they were commanded to deliver up their Bibles to be burnt, the Church gave no indulgence for that neceſſity of the times, but exhorted men rather to deliver up their lives: and thoſe whoſe courage fail'd them in the encounter, were not only branded by the infamous name of *Traditors*, but ſeparated from the Communion of the Faithful, and not re-admitted till after many years of the ſevereſt penance.

This age is ſingular in its profanation.

17. I have given this brief narration, with a deſire that the Reader will compare the practice of former times with thoſe of the preſent, and ſee what he can find either among Heathens, Jews or Chriſtians, that can at all patronize our profaneſs. There was no reſpect thought too much for the falſe Oracles of a falſer God: and yet we think no contemts too great for thoſe of the true. The moral Law was ſo ſacred to the Jews, that no parts of its remoteſt retinue, thoſe ceremonial attendants, were to be lookt on as common: and we who are equally obliged by that Law, laugh at that by which we muſt one day be judged. The Ritual, the Preceptive, the Prophetic, and all other parts of ſacred Writ, were moſt ſedulouſly, moſt religiouſly guarded by them: and we look upon them as a winter nights tale, from which to fetch matter of ſport and merriment. Laſtly the firſt Chriſtians paid a veneration to, nay ſacrificed their lives to reſcue their Bibles from the unworthy uſage of the Heathens, and we our ſelves expoſe them to worſe; they would but have burnt them, we ſcorn and vilify them, and outvy even the perſecutors malice with our contemt. Theſe are miſerable Antitheſiſes; yet this God knows is the caſe with too many. I wonder what new ſtate of Felicity hereafter theſe men have fancied to themſelves: for ſure they cannot think theſe retrograde ſteps, can ever bring them ſo much as to the Heathens Elyſium, much leſs the Chriſtians Heaven.

We do not uſe to burn, or triſle with the deeds and conveiances of our eſtates.

18. It will therefore concern thoſe who do not quite renounce their claim to that Heaven, to conſider ſoberly, how inconſiſtent their practice is with thoſe hopes. A man may have a great eſtate convey'd to him; but if he will madly burn, or childiſhly make paper kites of his Deeds, he forfeits his title with his evidence: and thoſe certainly that deal ſo with the Conveiance of their eternal inheritance, will not ſpeed better. If they will thus dally and play with them, God will be as little in earneſt in the performance, as they are in the reception of the promiſes; nay he will take his turn of mocking too, and when their ſcene of mirth is over, his will begin. A dreadful menace of this we have *Prov.* 1.24, 25, *&c.* which deſerves to be ſet down at large, *Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed, I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded: But ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof: I alſo will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as deſolation, and your deſtruction cometh as a whirlwind: when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon you, then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer, they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me.* Would God I could as well tranſcribe this Text into mens hearts, and there would need no more to ſecure the whole Canon of Scripture from their profanation! Could men but look a little before them, and apprehend how in the daies of their diſtreſs and agony, they will gaſp for thoſe comforts which they now turn into ridicule; they would not thus madly defeat themſelves, cut off their beſt and only reſerve, and with a pitiful contemt, caſt away thoſe Cordials, which will then be the only ſupport of their fainting ſpirits. As for thoſe who deride Scripture upon Athei-

ſtical grounds, all I ſhall ſay is to refer to what I have ſaid in the beginning of this Section; they had need be very well aſſured that foundation be not ſandy: for if it be, this reproching God's word will be a conſiderable addition to the guilt of all their other hoſtility, and how jolly ſoever they ſeem at preſent, it may be when that queſtion they are ſo willing to take for granted, is by death drawing near a deciſion, ſome of their confidence will retire, and leave them in an amazed expectation of ſomwhat, which they are ſure cannot be good for them, who have ſo ill provided for it. Then perhaps their merry vein will fail them; and not their infidelity, but their deſpair may keep them from invocating that Power they have ſo long derided. 'Tis certain it has ſo happened with ſome: for as Practical, ſo Speculative wickedneſs, has uſually another aſpect, when it ſtands in the ſhadow of death, than in the dazling beams of health and vigor. It would therefore be wiſdom before-hand to draw it out of this deceitful light, and by ſober ſerious thoughts place it as near as may be in thoſe circumſtances in which 'twill then appear: and then ſure to hearts that are not wholly petrified, 'twill appear ſafer to own a God early and upon choice, than late upon compulſion.

If duty will not reſtrain from atheiſtical diſcourſe, civility ſhould.

19. However if they will not yield themſelves Homagers, yet the mere poſſibility of their being in the wrong, ſhould methinks perſwade them at leaſt to be civil adverſaries. A generous man will not purſue even a falling enemy with revilings and reproch, much leſs will a wiſe man do it to one who is in any the leaſt probability of revenging it: it being a receiv'd Maxim, That there is no greater folly than for a man to let his tongue betray him to miſchief. Let it therefore in this caſe at leaſt ſtand neuter, that if by their words they be not juſtified, yet by their words they may not be condemned. They can be no looſers by it: for at the utmoſt, 'tis but keeping in a little unſavoury breath, which (ſuppoſing no Gods to be offended with it) is yet nauſeous to all thoſe men who believe there is one. To thoſe indeed who have a zeal for their faith, there can be no diſcourſe ſo intolerable, ſo diſobliging: it turns converſation into skirmiſhing, and perpetual diſputes. The Egyptians were ſo zealous for their brutiſh Deities, that *Moſes* preſumed the Iſraelites ſacrificing of thoſe beaſts they adored, muſt needs ſet them in an uproar, *Exod.* 8. 26. And ſure thoſe who do acknowledge a Divine power, cannot contentedly ſit by to hear him blaſphemed. 'Tis true there are ſome ſo cool, that they are of the ſame mind for God, that *Gideon*'s father was for *Baal*, *Judges* 6. 31. *Let him plead for himſelf*, they will not appear in his defence: yet even theſe have a ſecret conſciouſneſs, that they ought to do ſo, and therefore have ſome uneaſineſs in being put to the Teſt: ſo that it cannot be a pleaſant entertainment even for them. And therefore thoſe who have no fear of God to reſtrain them, ſhould methinks, unleſs they be perfectly of the temper of the unjuſt Judge, *Luke* 17. 1. in reſpect to men, abſtain from all ſorts of impious diſcourſe; and at leaſt be civil, tho' they will not be pious.

SECT. IV.

Of Detraction.

Detraction ſeems to have prevail'd among men, in that they are not generally convinc'd of its guilt.

1. WE have ſeen in the laſt Section the inſolence of the Tongue towards God; and ſure we cannot expect it ſhould pay more reverence to men. If there be thoſe that dare *ſtretch their mouths againſt heaven Pſalm.* 73. 9. we are not to wonder if there be more that will *ſhoot their arrows, even bitter words,* againſt the beſt on earth, *Pſalm* 64. 3. I ſhall not attemt to ranſack the whole quiver, by ſhewing every particular ſort of verbal injuries which relate to our Neighbors, but rather chuſe out ſome few, which either for the extraordinarineſs of their guilt, or the frequency of their practice, are the moſt eminent. I begin with *Detraction*, in which both thoſe qualities concur: for as in ſome inſtances 'tis one of the higheſt ſins, ſo in the general 'tis certainly one of the moſt common, and by being ſo becomes inſenſible. This vice (above all others) ſeems to have maintain'd not only its Empire, but its reputation too. Men are not yet convinc'd heartily that it is a ſin: or if any, not of ſo deep a die, or ſo wide an extent as indeed it is. They have if not falſe, yet imperfect notions of it, and by not knowing how far its Circle reaches, do often like young Conjurers ſtep beyond the limits of their ſafety.

And therefore remains with otherwiſe vertuous men.

2. This I am the apter to believe, becauſe I ſee ſome degree of this fault cleave to thoſe, who have eminently corrected all other exorbitances of the Tongue. Many who would ſtartle at an Oath, whoſe ſtomachs as well as conſciences recoil at an obſcenity, do yet ſlide glibly into a Detraction: which yet methinks perſons otherwiſe of ſtrict converſations ſhould not do frequently and habitually, had not their eaſy thoughts of the guilt ſmoothed the way to it.

If it were light in it ſelf, cuſtom might give great aggravations.

3. It may therefore be no unkind attemt, to try to diſentangle from this ſnare by diſplaying it; ſhewing the whole contexture of the ſin, how 'tis woven with threds of different ſizes, yet the leaſt of them ſtrong enough to nooze and intrap us. And alas, if Satan fetter us, 'tis indifferent to him whether it be by a cable or a hair: nay perhaps the ſmalleſt ſins are his greateſt ſtratagems. The finer his line is ſpun, the leſs ſhadow it caſts, and is leſs apt to fright us from the hook: and tho' there be much odds between a talent of lead and a grain of ſand, yet thoſe grains may be accumulated, 'till they out weigh the talent. It was a good reply of *Plato*'s, to one who murmured at his reproving him for a ſmall matter, *Cuſtom*, ſaies he, *is no ſmall matter*. And indeed ſuppoſing any ſin were ſo ſmall as we are willing to fancy moſt, yet an indulgent habit even of that would be certainly ruinous: that indulgence being perfectly oppoſite to the Love of God, which better can conſiſt with the indeliberate commiſſions of many ſins, than with an allowed perſiſtance in any one.

The ſin conſider'd abſolutely is great.

4. But in this matter of Detraction I cannot yield that any is ſmall, ſave only comparatively with ſome other of the ſame kind which is greater: for abſolutely conſider'd, there is even in the very loweſt degrees of it, a flat contradiction to the grand rule of Charity, the loving our neighbor as our ſelves. And ſurely that which at once violates the

ſum of the whole ſecond Table of the Law, for ſo our Savior renders it *Luke* 10.7. muſt be lookt on as no trifling inconſiderable guilt. To evidence this I ſhall in the Anatomizing this ſin, apply this Rule to every part of it. I ſhall firſt conſider it in Groſs, in its entire body, and after deſcend to its ſeveral limbs.

Detraction imports the leſſening of a man in his fame.

5. Detraction in the native importance of the word, ſignifies the withdrawing or taking off from a thing; and as it is applied to the reputation, it denotes the imparing and leſſening a man in point of fame, rendring him leſs valued and eſteem'd by others, which is the final aim of Detraction, tho' purſued by various means.

Which men generally value as their civil life.

6. This is juſtly lookt on as one of the moſt unkind deſigns one man can have upon another, there being implanted in every mans nature a great tenderneſs of Reputation: and to be careleſs of it, is lookt on as a mark of a Degenerous mind. On which account *Solon* in his Laws preſumes, that he that will ſell his own fame, will alſo ſell the public intereſt. 'Tis true, many have improv'd this too far, blown up this native ſpark into ſuch flames of Ambition, as has ſet the world in a combuſtion; Such as *Alexander*, *Cæſar*, and others, who ſacrificed Hecatombs to their Fame, fed it up to a prodigy upon a Canibal diet the fleſh of men: yet even theſe exceſſes ſerve to evince the univerſal conſent of mankind, that Reputation is a valuable and deſirable thing.

To which the Scriptures add their ſuffrage.

7. Nor have we only the ſuffrage of man, but the atteſtation of God himſelf, who frequently in Scripture gives teſtimony to it: *A good name is better than great riches, Prov.* 22. 1. And again, *A good name is better than precious ointment, Eccleſ.* 7. 1. And the more to recommend it, he propoſes it as a reward to Piety and Vertue, as he menaces the contrary to wickedneſs. *The memory of the juſt ſhall be bleſſed, but the name of the wicked ſhall rot.* And that we may not think this an invitation fitted only to the Jewiſh œconomy, the Apoſtle goes farther, and propoſes the endeavor after it as a duty, *Whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any vertue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things, Phil.* 4. 8.

All good men have preferred their reputation before their goods or life.

8. And accordingly good men have in their eſtimate ranked their names the next degree to their Souls, preferr'd them before goods or life. Indeed 'tis that which gives an inferior ſort of Immortality, and makes us even in this world ſurvive our ſelves. This part of us alone continues verdant in the grave, and yields a perfume, when we are ſtench and rottenneſs: the conſideration whereof has ſo prevail'd with the more generous Heathens, that they have cheerfully quitted life in contemplation of it. Thus *Epaminondas* alacriouſly expired, in confidence that he left behind him a perpetual memory of the victories he had atchiev'd for his Country. *Brutus* ſo courted the fame of a Patriot, that he brake thro' all the obſtacles of gratitude and humanity to attain it: he cheerfully bare the defeat of his attemt, in contemplation of the glory of it. 'Twere endleſs to recount the ſtories of the *Codri*, *Decii*, and *Curtii*, with the train of thoſe noble Hero's, who in behalf of their Countries devoted themſelves to certain death.

Our own reſentments of ill dealing in this kind, will convince us of the greatneſs of the injury.

9. But we need no forreign Mediums to diſcover the value of a good name: let every man weigh it but in his own ſcales, return to his breaſt, and there reflect on that impatience he has when his own repute is invaded. To what dangers, to what guilts do's ſomtimes the mere fancy of a reproch hurry men? It makes them really forfeit that vertue from whence all true reputation ſprings, and like *Eſop*'s dog looſe the ſubſtance by too greedy catching at the ſhadow; an irrefragable proof how great a price they ſet upon their fame.

10. And then ſince reaſon ſets it at ſo high a rate, and paſſion at a higher, we may conclude the violating this intereſt, one of the greateſt injuries in human commerce; ſuch as is reſented, not only by the raſh, but the ſober: ſo that we muſt pick out only blocks and ſtones, the ſtupid and inſenſible part of mankind, if we think we can inflict this wound without an afflictive ſmart. And tho' the power of Chriſtianity do's in ſome ſo moderate this reſentment, that none of thoſe blows ſhall recoil, no degree of revenge be attemted; yet that do's not at all juſtify or excuſe the inflicter. It may indeed be a uſeful trial of the patience and meekneſs of the defam'd, yet the defamer has not the leſs either of crime or danger: not of crime, for that is rather enhanc'd than abated by the goodneſs of the perſon injur'd; nor of danger, ſince God is the more immediat avenger of thoſe who attemt not to be their own. But if the injury meet not with this meekneſs (as in this vindictive age 'tis manifold odds it will not) it then acquires another accumulative guilt, ſtands anſwerable not only for its own poſitive ill, but for all the accidental which it cauſes in the ſufferer, who by this means is robb'd not only of his repute, but his innocence alſo, provoked to thoſe unchriſtian returns, which draw God alſo into the enmity, and ſet him at once at war with heaven and earth. And tho' as to his immediat judgment, he muſt bear his iniquity, anſwer for his impatience: yet as in all civil inſurrections the ringleader is lookt on with a particular ſeverity, ſo doubtleſs in this caſe, the firſt provoker has by his ſeniority and primogeniture a double portion of the guilt, and may conſequently expect of the Puniſhment, according to the Doom of our Saviour, *Wo be to that man by whom the offence cometh*, *Mat.* 18. 7.

The miſchiefs are infinit that follow Detraction.

11. Indeed there is ſuch a train of miſchiefs uſually follow this ſin, that 'tis ſcarce poſſible to make a full eſtimate of its malignity. 'Tis one of the grand incendiaries which diſturbs the peace of the world, and has a great ſhare in moſt of its quarrels. For could we examin all the feuds which harraſs Perſons, Families, nay ſomtimes Nations too, we ſhould find the greater part take their riſe from injurious reprochful words, and that for one which is commenc'd upon the intuition of any real conſiderable intereſt, there are many which owe their being to this licentiouſneſs of the Tongue.

The guilt is alſo eaſily incurr'd.

12. In regard therefore of its proper guilt, and all thoſe remoter ſins and miſeries which enſue it, 'tis every man's great concern to watch over himſelf. Neither is it leſs in reſpect both of that univerſal aptneſs we have to this ſin, and its being ſo perpetually at hand, that for others we muſt attend occaſions and convenient ſeaſons, but the opportunities of this are alwaies ready: I can do my neighbor this injury, when I can do him no other. Beſides the multitude of objects do proportionably multiply both the poſſibilities and incitations; and the objects here are as numerous, as there are Perſons in the world, I either know, or have heard of. For tho' ſome ſorts of Detractions ſeem confin'd to thoſe to whom we bear particular malice, yet there are other kinds of it more ranging, which fly indifferently at all. Laſtly this ſin has the aid almoſt of univerſal example, which is an advantage beyond all the other, there being ſcarce any ſo irreſiſtable inſinuation as the practice of thoſe with whom we converſe, and no ſubject of converſe ſo common as the defaming our neighbors.

Therefore needs to be particularly decipher'd.

13. Since then the path is ſo ſlippery, it had not need be dark too. Let us then take in the beſt light we can, and attentively view this ſin

in its ſeveral branches, that by a diſtinct diſcovery of the divers acts and degrees of it, we may the better be arm'd againſt them all.

Sect. V.

Of Lying Defamation.

Defamatory reports are either true or falſe.

1. DETRACTION being (as we have already ſaid) the leſſening and impairing a man in his repute, we may reſolve, that whatever conduces to that end, is properly a Detraction. I ſhall begin with that which is moſt eminent, the ſpreading of Defamatory reports. Theſe may be of two kinds, either falſe, or true: which tho' they ſeem to be of very different complexions, yet may ſpring from the ſame ſtock, and drive at the ſame deſign. Let us firſt conſider of the falſe.

The higheſt degree is the inventing a perfect falſity.

2. And this admits of various circumſtances. Somtimes a man invents a perfect falſity of another; ſomtimes he that do's not invent it, yet reports it, tho' he know it to be falſe; and a third ſort there are, who having not certain knowledg whether it be falſe or no, do yet divulge it as an abſolute certainty, or at leaſt with ſuch artificial inſinuations, as may biaſs the hearer on that hand. The former of theſe is a crime of ſo high, ſo diſingenuous a nature, that tho' many are vile enough to commit it, none are ſo impudent to avow it. Even in this age of inſulting vice, when almoſt all other wickedneſs appears bare-fac'd, this is fain to keep on the vizard. No man will own himſelf a falſe accuſer: for if modeſty do not reſtrain him, yet his very malice will; ſince to confeſs would be to defeat his deſign. Indeed it is of all other ſins the moſt Diabolical, it being a conjunction of two of Satans moſt eſſential properties, Malice and Lying. We know 'tis his peculiar title to be *the Accuſer of the brethren*: and when we tranſcribe his copy, we alſo aſſume his nature, intitle our ſelves to a deſcent from him, *Ye are of your father the Devil, John* 8. 44. We are by it rendred a ſort of *Incubus* brats, the infamous progenies of the lying Spirit. It is indeed a ſin of ſo groſs, ſo formidable a bulk, that there needs no help of Optics to render it diſcernable, and therefore I need not further expatiate on it.

A ſecond degree is the wilful propagating anothers lie.

3. The next degree is not much ſhort of it; what it wants is rather of invention than malice: for he that will ſo adopt anothers lie, ſhews he would willingly have bin its proper Father. It do's indeed differ no more than the maker of adulterate wares, do's from the vender of them: and certainly there cannot be a more ignominious trade, than the being Huckſters to ſuch vile Merchandiſe. Neither is the ſin leſs than the baſeneſs: we find the *Lover* of a lie ranked in an equal form of guilt with the *Maker*, *Rev.* 21. 27. And ſurely he muſt be preſum'd to love it, that can deſcend to be the broker to it, help it to paſs currant in the world.

A third degree is the reporting that, whoſe truth the reporter is not aſſur'd of.

4. The third ſort of Detractors look a little more demurely, and with the woman in the *Proverbs*, Chapter 30. v. 20. *wipe their mouths, and ſay they have done no wickedneſs*. They do not certainly know the falſity of what they report, and their ignorance muſt ſerve them as an Amulet againſt the guilt both of deceit and malice: but I fear it will do neither. For firſt perhaps they are affectedly ignorant: they are ſo willing it ſhould

be true, that they have not attemted to examine it. But ſecondly it do's not ſuffice that I do not know the falſity: for to make me a true ſpeaker, 'tis neceſſary I know the truth of what I affirm. Nay if the thing were never ſo true, yet if I knew it not to be ſo, its truth will not ſecure me from being a liar: and therefore whoever endeavors to have that receiv'd for a certainty, which himſelf knows not to be ſo, offends againſt truth. The utmoſt that can conſiſt with ſincerity, is to repreſent it to others as doubtful as it appears to him: yet even that how conſonant ſoever to truth, is not Charity. Even doubtful accuſations leave a ſtain behind them, and often prove indelible injuries to the party accuſed: how much more then do the more poſitive and confident aſperſions we have hitherto ſpoken of? Let me add only this concerning this latter ſort, that they are greater advancers of Defamatory deſigns, than the very firſt contriyers. For thoſe upon a conſciouſneſs of their falſneſs are obliged to proceed cautiouſly, to pick out the credulous and leaſt diſcerning perſons, on whom to impoſe their fixions, and dare not produce them in all companies for fear of detection: but theſe in confidence that the untruth (if it be one) lies not at their door, ſpeak it without any reſtraint in all places, at all times, and what the others are fain to whiſper, they proclaim, like our new Engine, which pretends to convey a whiſper many miles off. So that in the caſe of Stealing, 'tis proverbially ſaid, That if there were no receivers, there would be no thieves; ſo in this of Slander, if there were fewer ſpreaders, there would be fewer forgers of Libels: the manufacture would be diſcourag'd, if it had not theſe retailers to put off the wares.

All theſe practices fall under the rule of doing as we would be done by.

5. Now to apply theſe practices to our rule of duty, there will need no very cloſe inſpection to diſcern the obliquity. The moſt ſuperficial glance will evidence theſe ſeveral degrees of Slanderers, to do what they would not be willing to ſuffer. Who among them can be content to be falſly aſperſed? Nay ſo far are they from that, that let but the ſhadow of their own calumny reflect on themſelves, let any but truly tell them that they have falſly accuſed others, they grow raving and impatient, like a dog at a looking-glaſs fiercely combating that image which himſelf creates: and how ſmoothly ſoever the original lie ſlides from them, the Eccho of it grates their ears. And indeed 'tis obſervable, that thoſe which make the greateſt havock of other mens reputation, are the moſt nicely tender of their own; which ſets this ſin of calumny in a moſt Diametrical oppoſition to the Evangelical precept of *Loving our neighbors as our ſelves.*

Defamation is generally founded either on malice or intereſt.

6. Thus much is diſcernable even in the ſurface of the crime: but if we look deeper and examine the motives, we ſhall find the foundation well agrees to the ſuperſtructure, they being uſually one of theſe two, *Malice* or *Intereſt*. And indeed the thing is ſo diſingenious, ſo contrary to the dictates of Humanity as well as Divinity, that I muſt in reverence to our common nature, preſume it muſt be ſome very forcible impellent, that muſt drive a man ſo far from himſelf. The Devil here plaies the Artiſt: and as the fatalleſt poiſons to man are (they ſay) drawn from human bodies, ſo here he extracts the venom of our Iraſcible and Concupiſcible part, and in it dips thoſe arrows, which we thus ſhoot at one another.

Paſſions exceedingly impetuous and precipitate.

7. 'Tis needleſs to harangue ſeverally upon each. The world too experimentally knows the force of both. *Malice* is that whirlwind, which has ſhook States and Families, no leſs than private Perſons; a paſſion ſo

impetuous and precipitate, that it often equally involves the Agent and the Patient: a malicious man being of like violence with thoſe who flung in the three Children, *Daniel* 3. conſumed by thoſe flames into which he caſt others. As for *Intereſt*, 'tis that univerſal Monarch to which all other Empires are Tributaries, to which men ſacrifice not only their Conſciences and Innocence, but (what is uſually much dearer) their Senſualities and Vices. Thoſe whom all the Divine (either) threats or promiſes, cannot perſwade to mortify, nay but reſtrain one Luſt, at *Mammon*'s beck will diſclaim many, and force their inclinations to comply with their intereſt.

'Tis alſo practiced a wit and divertiſement.

8. And whilſt this ſin of Calumny has two ſuch potent Abettors, we are not to wonder at its growth: as long as men are malicious and deſigning, they will be traducing: thoſe Cyclops's will be perpetually forging Thunderbolts, againſt which no innocence or vertue can be proof. And alas we daily find too great effect of their induſtry. But tho' theſe are the forgers of the more ſolemn deliberate calumnies, yet this ſportive age hath produc'd another ſort, there being men that defame others by way of divertiſement, invent little ſtories that they may find themſelves exerciſe, and the Town talk. This if it muſt paſs for ſport, is ſuch as *Solomon* deſcribes, *Prov.* 26. 18, 19. *As a mad man that caſteth fire-brands, arrows and death, ſo is he that deceiveth his neighbor, and ſaith, am not I in ſport?* He that ſhoots an arrow in jeſt, may kill a man in earneſt, and he that gives himſelf liberty to play with his neighbors fame, may ſoon play it away. Moſt men have ſuch an aptneſs to entertain ſiniſter opinions of others, that they greedily draw in any ſuggeſtion of that kind; and one may as eaſily perſwade the thirſty earth to refund the water ſhe has ſuckt into her veins, as them to depoſite a prejudice they have once taken up. Therefore ſuch experiments upon fame, are as dangerous as that which *Alexander* is ſaid to have made of the force of *Naptha* upon his Page, from which he ſcarce eſcaped with life. Theſe jocular ſlanders are often as miſchievous as thoſe of deeper deſign, and have from the ſlightneſs of the temtation an enhancement of guilt. For ſure he that can put ſuch an intereſt of his neighbors in balance with a little fit of laughter, ſets it at a lower price than he that hopes to enrich or advance himſelf by it: and tho' it paſs among ſome for a ſpecimen of wit, yet it really leaves them among *Solomon*'s fools who *make a mock at ſin*, *Prov.* 14. 9. In the mean time ſince ſlander is a plant that can grow in all ſoils, ſince the frolic humor as well as the moroſe betraies to the guilt, who can hope to eſcape this *Scourge of the Tongue*, as the Wiſe man calls it, which communicates with all. Perſons of all ranks do mutually aſperſe, and are aſperſed: ſo that he who would not have his credulity abuſed, has ſcarce a ſecurer way, than (like that Aſtrologer, who made his Almanac give a tolerable account of the weather by a direct inverſion of the common prognoſticators,) to let his belief run quite counter to reports. Yea ſo Epidemic is this diſeaſe grown, that even religion (at leaſt thoſe parties and factions which aſſume that name) has got a taint of it; each ſect or opinion ſeeking to repreſent its Antagoniſt as odious as it can: and whilſt they contend for ſpeculative truth, they by mutual calumnies forfeit the practic: a thing that juſtly excites the grief of good men, to ſee that thoſe who all pretend to the ſame Chriſtianity, ſhould only be unanimous in the violating that Truth and Charity it preſcribes.

9. And if theſe be the weapons of our ſpiritual warfare, what may we think of the carnal? How are our ſecular animoſities purſu'd, when our Speculations are thus managed? How eaſily do we run down the reputation of any who ſtand in the way, either of our ſpleen or avarice? When *Joſeph*'s reſolute purity had changed the ſcene of his Miſtreſs's paſſion, ſhe do's as readily ſhift that of guilt too, and fixes her crime upon him, *Gen.* 39. So when *Ziba* had a mind to undermine *Mephiboſheth* in his eſtate, he firſt practices upon his fame in a falſe accuſation, 2 *Sam.* 16. 3. And alas how familiarly do men now ſee both theſe ſcenes re-acted? Thoſe who will not take vice into their boſoms, ſhall yet have it beſpatter their faces: they who will not run *to the ſame exceſs of riot*, muſt expect to be evil ſpoken of, 1 *Pet.* 4. 4. Nay not only pious men, but piety it ſelf partakes of the ſame fate, falls under the two-edg'd ſlander both of deceit and folly. And if men cannot be permitted quietly to enjoy their piety, much leſs will they thoſe things whereof the world has more guſt, I mean ſecular advantages. There are ſtill crimes to be diſcover'd in the poſſeſſors of honors or Eſtates, and they wonderfully excite the zeal of thoſe who would ſupplant them. What artifices are there to make them appear unworthy of what they have, that others more unworthy may ſucceed them? Nor are theſe ſtorms only in the upper region, in the higher ranks of men; but if we paſs thro' all degrees, we ſhall find the difference is rather in the value of the things, than in the means of purſuing them. He that pretends to the meaneſt office, do's as ſtudiouſly diſparage his competitor, as he that is rival'd for a Kingdom. Nay even he that has but a merry humor to gratify, makes no ſcruple to do it with the loſs of another man's reputation.

'Tis uſed as a weapon againſt adverſaries of all kinds.

10. Thus do we accommodate every petty temporal intereſt at the coſt of our eternal: and as an unskilful Fencer, whilſt he is purſuing his thruſt, expoſes his body; ſo whilſt we thus actuate our own malice, we abandon our ſelves to Satan's, receive mortal wounds from him, only that we may give a few light ſcratches to one another. For as I have before ſaid, there is nothing do's more ſecure his title to us, than this vice of Calumny, it bearing his proper impreſs and figure. And we may fear *Chriſt* will one day make the ſame Judgment of Perſons as he did of coin, and award them to him *whoſe Image and Superſcription* they bear, *Matth.* 22. 20.

We accommodate every little temporal intereſt at the coſt of our eternal.

11. And now how great a madneſs is it, to make ſuch coſtly oblations to ſo vile an Idol? This is indeed the worſhiping our own Imaginations, preferring a malicious fiction before a real felicity, and is but faintly reſembled by him, who is ſaid to have choſen to part with his Biſhopric, rather than burn his Romance. Alas are there not groſs corporal ſins enough to ruin us, but muſt we have aereal ones too, damn our ſelves with Chimera's, and by theſe forgeries of our brains dream our ſelves to deſtruction?

A great madneſs to add to our groſs corporal ſins, the guilt of forgeries and Chimera's.

12. Let all thoſe then who thus unhappily imploy their inventive faculty, timely conſider, how unthriving a trade 'tis finally like to prove, that all their falſe accuſations of others, will rebound in true ones upon themſelves. It do's often ſo in this world, where many times the moſt Clandeſtine contrivances of this kind meet with detection: or if they ſhould happen to keep on the diſguiſe here, yet 'twill infallibly be torn off at the great day of manifeſtation, when before God, Angels, and Men, they will be render'd infinitly more vile, than 'twas poſſible for them here to make others.

Our falſe accuſations of others, will be true ones upon our ſelves.

SECT. VI.

Of Uncharitable Truth.

The relating of what is true may be Defamation.

I. IN the next place we are to conſider of the other branch of Deſamatory reports, *viz.* ſuch as are true: which tho' they muſt be confeſt to be of a lower form of guilt than the former, yet as to the kind, they equally agree in the definition of Detraction, ſince 'tis poſſible to impair a mans credit by true reports as well as by falſe.

Tho' guilt be the material, diſcovery is the formal cauſe of infamy.

2. To clear this I ſhall firſt obſerve, that altho' every fault have ſome penal effects which are coetaneous to the act, yet this of Infamy is not ſo: this is a more remote conſequent; that which it immediately depends upon, is the publiſhing. A man may do things which to God and his own conſcience render him abominable, and yet keep his reputation with men: but when this ſtifled crime breaks out, when his ſecret guilts are detected, then, and not till then, he becomes infamous: ſo that altho' his ſin be the Material, yet it is the diſcovery that is the Formal cauſe of his infamy.

The divulging of conceled faults is not alwaies unlawful.

3. This being granted, it follows that he that divulges an unknown conceled fault, ſtands accountable for all the conſequences that flow from that divulging; but whether accountable as for guilt, muſt be determin'd by the particular circumſtances of the cauſe. So that here we muſt admit of an exception: for tho' every diſcovery of anothers fault be in the ſtrict natural ſenſe of the word a Detraction, yet it will not alwaies be the ſin of Detraction, becauſe in ſome inſtances there may ſome higher obligation intervene, and ſuperſede that we owe to the fame of our neighbor; and in thoſe caſes it may not only be lawful, but neceſſary to expoſe him.

Particularly when the diſcovery is upon obligation of Juſtice or Charity.

4. Now all ſuch caſes I conceive may ſummarily be reduc'd to two heads, Juſtice and Charity. Firſt as to Juſtice: that we know is a fundamental vertue, and he that ſhall violate that, to abound in another, is as abſurd, as he that undermines the foundation to raiſe the walls. We are not to ſteal to give alms, and God himſelf has declar'd that he hates robbery for a burnt-offering: ſo that no pretence either of Charity or Piety can abſolve us from the duty we owe to Juſtice. Now it may often fall out that by concealing one mans fault, I may be injurious to another, nay to a whole community: and then I aſſume the guilt I concele, and by the Laws both of God and Man, am judged an acceſſary.

Juſtice not only to others but alſo to ones ſelf.

5. And as Juſtice to others enforces, ſo ſomtimes Juſtice to a mans ſelf allows the publiſhing of a fault, when a conſiderable intereſt either of fame or fortune cannot otherwiſe be reſcued. But to make loud outcries of injury, when they tend nothing to the redreſs of it, is a liberty rather aſſumed by rage and impatience, than authoriz'd by juſtice. Nay often in that caſe the complainer is the moſt injurious Perſon; for he inflicts more than he ſuffers, and in lieu of ſome trivial right of his which is invaded, he aſſaults the other in a nearer intereſt, by wounding him in his good name: but if the cauſe be conſiderable, and the manner regular, there lies ſure no obligations upon any man, to wrong himſelf, to indulge to another.

6. Nei-

Charity tho' it covers, yet it ſomtimes betraies offences.

6. Neither do's Charity retrench this liberty: for tho' it be one act of Charity to concele another mans faults, yet ſomtimes it may be inconſiſtent with ſome more important Charity, which I owe to a third Perſon, or perhaps to a multitude; as in thoſe caſes wherein public benefit is concern'd. If this were not allowable, no hiſtory could lawfully be written, ſince if true, it cannot but recount the faults of many: no evidence could be brought in againſt a Malefactor: and indeed all diſcipline would be ſubverted, which would be ſo great a miſchief, that Charity obliges to prevent it, what Defamation ſoever fall upon the guilty by it. For in ſuch inſtances 'tis a true rule, that mercy to the evil, proves cruelty to the innocent: and as in a competition of miſchiefs, we are to chuſe the leaſt, ſo of two goods the greateſt, and the more extenſive, is the moſt eligible.

Charity not only to a neighbor, but alſo to ones ſelf.

7. Nay even that Charity which reflects upon my ſelf, may alſo ſomtimes ſuperſede that to my Neighbor, the rule obliging me to love him as, not better than, my ſelf. I need not ſure ſilently aſſent to my own unjuſt Defamation, for fear of proving another a falſe accuſer, nor ſuffer my ſelf to be made a begger, to concele another mans being a thief. Tis true, in a great inequality of intereſts, Charity (whoſe Character it is, *Not to ſeek her own*, 1 Cor. 13. 5.) will promt me to prefer a greater concern of my neighbours, before a ſlight one of my own: but in equal circumſtances I am ſure at liberty to be kind firſt to my ſelf. If I will recede even from that, I may; but that is then to be accounted among the Heroic flights of Charity, nor her binding and indiſpenſable Laws.

Of the unwarrantable cauſes of Defamation.

8. Having now ſet the boundaries to the excepted caſes; as all inſtances within them will be legitimated, ſo all without them will (by the known rule of exceptions) be precluded, and fall under that general duty we owe to our neighbor, of tendering his credit: an obligation ſo univerſally infringed, that 'tis not imaginable the breach ſhould alwaies happen within the excepted caſes. When 'tis remembred how unactive the principles of Juſtice and Charity are now grown in the world, we muſt certainly impute ſuch inceſſant effects, to ſome more vigorous cauſes: of which it may not be amiſs to point out ſome of the moſt obvious, and leave every man to examine which of them he finds moſt operative in himſelf.

Pride is a principal ingredient in Defamation.

9. In the firſt place I may reckon *Pride*, a humor which as it is alwaies mounting, ſo it will make uſe of any foot-ſtool towards its riſe. A man who affects an extraordinary ſplendor of reputation, is glad to find any foils to ſet him off; and therefore will let no fault nor folly of anothers enjoy the ſhade, but brings it into the open light, that by that compariſon, his own excellencies may appear the brighter. I dare appeal to the breaſt of any proud man, whether he do not upon ſuch occaſions, make ſome Phariſaical reflections upon himſelf, whether he be not apt to ſay, *I am not like other men, or as this Publican, Luke* 18. tho' probably he leave out the *God I thank thee*. Now he that cheriſhes ſuch reſentments as theſe in himſelf, will doubtleſs be willing to propagate them to other men, and to that end render the blemiſhes of others as viſible as he can. But this betraies a degenerous ſpirit, which from a conſciouſneſs that he wants ſolid worth, on which to bottom a reputation, is fain to found it on the ruins of other mens. The true Diamond ſparkles even in the Sunſhine: 'tis but a glow-worm vertue, that ows its luſter to the darkneſs about it.

Another promter to Detraction is Envy.

10. Another promter to Detraction is *Envy*, which ſomtimes is particular, ſomtimes general. He that has a picque to another, would have him as hateful to all mankind as he is to him; and therefore as he grieves and repines at any thing that may advance his eſtimation, ſo he exults and triumphs when any thing occurs which may depreſs it, and is uſually very induſtrious to improve the opportunity, nay has a ſtrange ſagacity in hunting it out. No Vulture do's more quickly ſcent a carcaſs, than an envious Perſon do's thoſe *dead flies* which corrupt his neighbors ointment, *Eccleſ.* 10. 1. the vapor whereof his heat, like a ſtrong wind, ſcatters and diſperſes far and near. Nor needs he any great crime to practice on: every little infirmity or paſſion, lookt on thro' his Optics, appears a mountainous guilt. He can improve the leaſt ſpeck or freckle into a leproſy, which ſhall overſpread the whole man: and a cloud no *bigger than a mans hand*, like that of *Eliſha*, 1 *Kings* 18. 44. may in an inſtant, with the help of prejudice, grow to the utter darkening of his reputation, and fill the whole horizon with tempeſt and horror. Somtimes this envy is general, not confin'd to any mans perſon, but diffuſed to the whole nature. Some tempers there are ſo malign, that they wiſh ill to all, and believe ill of all; like *Timon* the Athenian, who profeſt himſelf a univerſal man-hater. He whoſe guilty conſcience reflects diſmal images of himſelf, is willing to put the ſame ugly ſhape upon the whole nature, and to conclude that all men are the ſame, were they but cloſely inſpected. And therefore when he can ſee but the leaſt glimmering of a fault in any, he takes it as a proof of his Hypotheſis, and with an envious joy calls in as many Spectators as he can. 'Tis certain there are ſome in whoſe ears nothing ſounds ſo harſh as the commendation of another, and on the contrary nothing is ſo melodious as a Defamation. *Plutarch* gave an apt inſtance of this upon *Ariſtides*'s baniſhment, whom when a mean Perſon had propos'd to oſtraciſm, being askt what diſpleſure *Ariſtides* had done him, he replied, *None, neither do I know him, but it grieves me to hear every body call him a juſt man.* I fear ſome of our keeneſt accuſers now adaies may give the ſame anſwer. No man that is eminent for Piety (or indeed but moral vertue) but he ſhall have many inſidious eies upon him *watching for his halting*: and if any the leaſt obliquity can be eſpied, he is uſed worſe than the vileſt malefactor: for ſuch are tried but at one bar, and know the utmoſt of their doom, but theſe are arraigned at every Table, in every Tavern. And at ſuch variety of Judicatories, there will be as great variety of ſentences; only they commonly concur in this one, that he is an Hypocrite, and then what complacency, what triumph have they in ſuch a diſcovery? There is not half ſo much Epicuriſm in any of their moſt ſtudied luxuries, no ſpectacle affords them ſo much pleſure, as a bleeding fame thus lying at their mercy.

Another occaſion of Detraction is flattery to a Patron.

11. Another ſort of Detractors there are, whoſe deſigns are not ſo black, but are mean and ſordid, much too light to be put in balance with a neighbors Credit. Of thoſe ſome will pick up all the little ſtories they can get, to humor a Patron: an artifice well known by thoſe trencher gueſts, who like Rats, ſtill haunt the beſt Proviſions. Theſe men do almoſt come up to a literal ſenſe of what the *Pſalmiſt* ſpoke in a figurative, *Pſal.* 14. *and eat up People for bread*, tear and worry men in their good names, that themſelves may eat. It was a Curſe denounced againſt *Eli*'s off-ſpring, *that they ſhould come and crouch for a morſel of bread*, 1 *Sam.* 2. 39. But ſuch men court this as a preferment, and to bring themſelves

ſelves within the reach of it, ſtick not to aſſume that vileſt office of common Delators. There are others who when they have got the knowledg of another mans fault, think it an endearing thing to whiſper it in the ear of ſome friend or confident. But ſure if they muſt needs ſacrifice ſome ſecret to their friendſhip, they ſhould take *David*'s rule, and *not offer that which coſt them nothing*. If they will expreſs their confidence, let them acquaint them with their own private crimes. That indeed would ſhow ſomthing of truſt: but thoſe experiments upon another man's coſt, will hardly convince any conſidering perſon of their kindneſs.

Another occaſion of Defamation is the itch of telling news.

12. There ſtill remains a yet more trifling ſort of Defamers, who have no deliberate deſign which they purſue in it, yet are as aſſiduous at the Trade as the deeper contrivers. Such are thoſe who publiſh their neighbors failings as they read Gazets, only that they may be telling News: an Itch wherewith ſome Peoples tongues are ſtrangely over-run, who can as well hold a glowing Coal in their mouths, as keep any thing they think New; nay will ſomtimes run themſelves out of breath, for fear leaſt any ſhould ſerve them as *Ahimaaz* did *Cuſhi*, 2 *Sam.* 18. 23. and tell the tale before them. This is one of the moſt Childiſh vanities imaginable: and ſure men muſt have Souls of a very low level, that can think it a commenſurate entertainment. Others there are who uſe Defamatory diſcourſe, neither for the love of News, nor Defamation, but purely for love of talk: whoſe ſpeech like a flowing Current bears away indiſcriminately whatever lies in its way. And indeed ſuch inceſſant talkers are uſually people not of depth enough to ſupply themſelves out of their own ſtore, and therefore can let no forreign acceſſion paſs by them, no more than a Mill which is alwaies going, can afford any waters to run waſte. I know we uſe to call this Talkativeneſs a Feminine vice; but to ſpeak impartially, I think, tho' we have given them the incloſure of the Scandal, they have not of the fault, and he that ſhall appropriate Loquacity to Women, may perhaps ſomtimes need to light *Diogenes*'s Candle to ſeek a man: for 'tis poſſible to go into Maſculine company, where 'twill be as hard to edg in a word, as at a Female Goſſiping. However as to this particular of Defaming, both the Sexes ſeem to be at a vie: and I think he were a very Critical Judg, that could determine between them.

Harmleſs intention will not excuſe from the guilt of Defamation.

13. Now leaſt theſe latter ſort of Defamers ſhould be apt to abſolve themſelves, as men of harmleſs intentions, I ſhall deſire them to conſider, that they are only more impertinent, not leſs injurious. For tho' it be granted, that the proud and envious are to make a diſtinct account for their Pride and Envy; yet as far as relates to the neighbor, they are equally miſchievous. *Anacreon* that was choaked with a grape-ſtone, died as ſurely as *Julius Cæſar* with his three and twenty wounds; and a man's reputation may be as well fool'd and prattled away, as maliciouſly betraied. Nay perhaps more eaſily; for where the ſpeaker can leaſt be ſuſpected of deſign, the hearer is apter to give him Credit: this way of inſinuating by familiar diſcourſe, being like thoſe poiſons that are taken in at the pores, which are the more inſenſibly ſuck'd in, and the moſt impoſſible to expel.

Of things that are bad 'tis vain to make compariſons.

14. But we need not diſpute which is worſe, ſince 'tis certain all are bad, none of them (or any that hold proportion with them) being at all able to pretend their warrant either from Juſtice or Charity. And then what our Savior ſaies in another caſe, will be appliable to this, *He that is not for us is againſt us*, *Mat.* 12. 30. He that in publiſhing his neighbors

bors faults, acts not upon the dictates of Juſtice or Charity, acts directly in contradiction to them: for where they do not upon ſome particular reſpects command, they do implicitly and generally forbid all ſuch diſcoveries.

If the occaſion be trivial, the ſin upon ſo ſlight a motive is the more inexcuſable. Beſides, in a mans fame nothing is trivial.

15. For firſt if the fault divulged be of a light nature, the offender cannot thereby merit ſo much as to be made a publick diſcourſe. Fame is a tender thing, and ſeldom is toſt and bandied without receiving ſome bruiſe, if not a crack: for reports we know like ſnow-balls gather ſtill the farther they role, and when I have once handed it to another, how know I how he may improve it; and if he deliver it ſo advanced to a third, he may give his contribution alſo to it, and ſo in a ſucceſſive tranſmitting, it may grow to ſuch a monſtrous bulk, as bears no proportion to its Original. He muſt be a great ſtranger to the world, that has not experimentally found the truth of this. How many perſons have lain under great and heavy ſcandals, which have taken their firſt riſe only from ſome inadvertence, or indiſcretion? Of ſo quick a growth is Slander, that the leaſt grain like that of muſtard-ſeed, mention'd *Mat.* 13. 32. immediately ſhoots up into a tree. And when it is ſo, it can no more be reduced back into its firſt cauſe, than a tree can ſhrink into that little ſeed from whence it firſt ſprang. No ruins are ſo irreparable as thoſe of reputation: and therefore he that pulls out but one ſtone towards the breach, may do a greater miſchief than perhaps he intends: and a greater injuſtice too; for by how much the more ſtrictly Juſtice obliges to reparation in caſe of injuries don, ſo much the more ſeverely do's it prohibit the doing thoſe injuries which are uncapable of being repair'd. In the Levitical Law he that knew his Ox was apt to gore, and yet kept him not up, ſtood reſponſible for any miſchief he happen'd to do, *Exod.* 21. 29. I think there is no conſidering man can be ignorant how apt even little trivial accuſations are to tear and mangle ones fame: and if yet the laviſh talker reſtrain them not, he certainly ſtands accountable to God, his Neighbor, and his own Conſcience, for all the danger they procure.

Many men have bin irrecoverably debauch'd by having their faults detected.

16. But if the report concern ſome higher and enormous crime, 'tis true the delinquent may deſerve the leſs pity, yet perhaps the reporter may not deſerve the leſs blame: for often ſuch a diſcovery ſerves but to enrage, not reclaim the offender, and precipitate him into farther degrees of ill. Modeſty and fear of ſhame, is one of thoſe natural reſtraints, which the wiſdom of God has put upon mankind, and he that once ſtumbles, may yet by the check of that bridle recover again: but when by a public detection he is fallen under that infamy he fear'd, he will then be apt to diſcard all caution, and to think he ow's himſelf the utmoſt pleſures of his vice, as the price of his reputation. Nay perhaps he advances farther, and ſets up for a reverſt ſort of Fame, by being eminently wicked: and he who before was but a Clandeſtine diſciple, becomes a Doctor of impiety. And ſure it were better to let a conceled crime remain in its wiſht obſcurity, than by thus rouzing it from its covert, bring it to ſtand at bay, and ſet it ſelf in this open defiance; eſpecially in this degenerous age, when vice has ſo many well wiſhers, that like a hoping party, they eagerly run in to any that will head them.

The divulging of crimes many times teaches them.

17. And this brings in a third conſideration relating to the public, to which the divulging of private (eſpecially if they be novel, unuſual) crimes, do's but an ill piece of ſervice. Vice is contagious, and caſts peſtilential vapors: and as he that ſhould bring out a plague-ſick Perſon,

to inform the world of his diſeaſe, would be thought not to have much befriended his neighborhood, ſo he that diſplaies theſe vicious Ulcers, whilſt he ſeeks to defame one, may perhaps infect many. We too experimentally find the force of ill examples. Men often take up ſins, to which they have no natural propenſion, merely by way of conformity and imitation. But if the inſtance happen in a crime, which more ſuits the practice of the hearers, tho' it cannot be ſaid to ſeduce, yet it may encourage and confirm them, embolden them not only the more frequently to act, but even to avow thoſe ſins, wherein they find they ſtand not ſingle: and by diſcovering a new acceſſory to their Party, invite them the more heartily and openly to eſpouſe it.

Our great concern to conceal our own faults, is a full proof of the injuſtice of divulging thoſe of others.

18. Theſe are ſuch effects as ſurely do very ill correſpond with that Juſtice and Charity we owe either to particular Perſons, or to mankind in General. And indeed no better can be expected, from a Practice which ſo perfectly contradicts the grand rule both of Juſtice and Charity, the doing as we would be done to. That this do's ſo, every man has a ready conviction within him, if he pleaſe but to conſult his own heart. Alas with what ſolicitude do we ſeek to hide our own guilts, what falſe dreſſes, what varniſhes have we for them? There are not more arts of diſguiſing our Corporal blemiſhes, than our moral: and yet whilſt we thus paint and parget our own deformities, we cannot allow any the leaſt imperfection of anothers to remain undetected, but tear off the veil from their bluſhing frailties, and not only expoſe, but proclaim them. And can there be a groſſer, a more deteſtable partiality than this? God may ſure in this inſtance (as in many others) expoſtulate with us as he did with Iſrael, *Ezekiel* 33. *Are not your ways unequal*? What Barbariſm, what inhumanity is it thus to treat thoſe of the ſame common nature with our ſelves, whom we cannot but know have the ſame concern to preſerve a Reputation, and the ſame regret to loſe it, which we have? And what a ſhame is it, that the Evangelical precept, of doing as we would be done to, which met with ſo much reverence from Heathens, that *Severus* the Emperor prefer'd it to all the Maxims of Philoſophers, ſhould be thus contemn'd and violated by Chriſtians, and that too upon ſuch ſlight inconſiderable motives as uſually prevail in this caſe of Defamation?

Calumny returns back upon its author.

19. But we are not to conſider this fault only in its root, as it is a defect of Juſtice and Charity, but in its product too, as it is a Seminary of more Injuſtice and Uncharitableneſs. Theſe diſadvantageous reports we make of our neighbors, are almoſt ſeen to come round: for let no man perſwade himſelf, that the hearers will keep his councel any better than he do's that of the defam'd Perſon. The ſofteſt whiſper of this kind, will find others to Eccho it, till it reach the ears of the concern'd Party, and perhaps with ſome enhancing circumſtances too. And when 'tis conſider'd how unwilling men are to hear of their faults, tho' even in the mildeſt and the moſt charitable way of admonition, 'tis not to be doubted a public Defamation will ſeem diſobliging enough to provoke a return; which again begets a rejoinder, and ſo the quarrel is carried on with mutual recriminations: all malicious inquiries are made into each others manners, and thoſe things which perhaps they did in cloſets, come to be proclaim'd upon the houſe-top: ſo the wild fire runs round, till ſomtimes nothing but blood will quench it; or if it arrive not to that, yet it uſually fixes in an irreconcileable feud. To this is often owing thoſe diſtances we ſee among friends and relations; this breeds

ſuch ſtrangeneſs, ſuch animoſities amongſt neighbors, that you cannot go to one, but you ſhall be entertain'd with invectives againſt the other; nay perhaps you ſhall looſe both, becauſe you are willing to ſide with neither.

By it peace is forfeited.

20. Theſe are the uſual conſequences of the liberty of the Tongue. And what account can any man give to himſelf, either in Chriſtianity or Prudence, that has let in ſuch a train of miſchiefs, merely to gratify an impotent childiſh humor of telling a tale? Peace was the great Legacy Chriſt left to his followers, and ought to be guarded, tho' we expoſe for it our greateſt temporal concerns, but cannot without deſpight to him, as well as our brethren, be thus proſtituted.

The emploiment is moſt diſgraceful.

21. Yet if we conſider it aſtractedly, from theſe more ſolemn miſchiefs which attend it, the mere levity and unworthineſs of it ſets it below an ingenious Perſon. We generally think a tatler and buſy-body a title of no ſmall reproch: yet truly I know not to whom it more juſtly belongs, than to thoſe, who buſy themſelves firſt in learning, and then in publiſhing the faults of others: an emploiment which the Apoſtle thought a blot, even upon the weaker ſex, and thinks the prevention of ſuch importance, that he preſcribes them to change their whole condition of life; to convert Widowhood (tho' a ſtate which in other reſpects he much prefers, 1 *Cor.* 7.8.) into Marriage, rather than expoſe themſelves to the temtation 1 *Tim.* 5.13, 14. And if their impotence cannot afford excuſe for it, what a debaſement is it of mens nobler faculties to be thus entertain'd? The Hiſtorian gives it as an ill indication of *Domitian*'s temper, that he emploi'd himſelf in catching and tormenting Flies: and ſure they fall not under a much better character, either for wiſdom, or good nature, who thus ſnatch up all the little fluttering reports they can meet with to the prejudice of their neighbors.

Cenſure is a branch of Detraction.

22. But beſides this divulging the faults of others, there is another branch of Detraction naturally ſpringing from this root, and that is cenſuring and ſevere judging of them. We think we have not well plai'd the Hiſtorians when we have told the thing, unleſs we add alſo our remarks and animadverſions on it. And altho' 'tis, God knows, bad enough to make a naked relation, and truſt it to the ſeverity of the hearers; yet few can content themſelves with that, but muſt give them a ſample of rigor, and by the bitterneſs of their own cenſure invite them to paſs the like: a proceſs contrary to all rules of Law or Equity, for the plantiff to aſſume the part of a Judg. And we may eaſily divine the fate of that mans fame, that is ſo unduly tried.

Every man ſets up a tribunal, to judge his neighbor.

23. 'Tis indeed ſad to ſee how many private tribunals are every where ſet up, where we ſcan and judge our neighbors actions, but ſcarce ever acquit any. We take up with the moſt incompetent witneſſes, nay often ſuborn our own ſurmiſes and jealouſies, that we may be ſure to caſt the unhappy Criminal. How nicely and ſcrupulouſly do we examine every circumſtance, (would God we were but half as exact in our own penitential inquiſitions) and torture it to make it confeſs ſomthing which appears not in the more general view of the fact, and which perhaps never was in the actors intention? In a word we do like witches with their Magical Chymiſtry, extract all the venom, and take none of the allay. By this means we confound the degrees of ſins, and ſentence deliberate and indeliberate, a habit or an act all at one rate, that is commonly, at the utmoſt it can amount to, even in its worſe acception: and ſure this were a moſt culpable corruption in judgment, could we ſhew our commiſſion to judg our brethren.

24. But here we may every one of us interrogate our ſelves in our Saviors words, *Who made me a Judg? Luke* 12. 14. And if he diſclaim'd it, (who in reſpect of his Divinity had the Supreme right) and that too in a caſe wherein one (at leaſt) of the Litigants had deſir'd his Interpoſition; what a boldneſs is it in us to aſſume it, where no ſuch appeal is made to us, but on the contrary the party diſowns our Autority? Nay (which is infinitly more) 'tis ſuperſeded by our great Law-giver, in that expreſs prohibition, *Mat.* 7. 1. *Judg not*, and that back'd with a ſevere penalty, *that ye be not judged.* As God hath appropriated vengeance to himſelf, ſo has he Judicature alſo; and 'tis an invaſion of his peculiar, for any (but his Delegates the lawful Magiſtrates) to pretend to either. And indeed in all private Judgments ſo much depends upon the intention of the Offender, that unleſs we could poſſeſs our ſelves of Gods Omniſcience, 'twill be as irrational as impious to aſſume his Autority. Until we know mens hearts, we are at the beſt but imperfect Judges of their Actions. At our rate of judging St. *Paul* had ſurely paſſed for a moſt malicious Perſecutor, whereas God ſaw he *did it ignorantly in unbelief*, and upon that intuition had *mercy on him*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. 'Tis therefore good counſel which the Apoſtle gives, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. *Judg nothing before the time until the Lord come.* For tho' 'tis ſaid *the Saints ſhall Judg the world*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 3. yet it muſt be at the great Aſſize, and he that will needs intrude himſelf into the office before the time, will be in danger to be rather Paſſive than Active in the Judicatory. I do not here adviſe to ſuch a ſtupid Charity, as ſhall make no diſtinction of Actions. I know there is a wo pronounc'd as well to thoſe who *call evil good, as good evil.* Surely when we ſee an open notorious ſin committed, we may expreſs a deteſtation of the Crime, tho' not of the Actor; nay it may ſomtimes be a neceſſary Charity, both to the Offendor, and to the innocent ſpectators, as an Amulet to keep them from the Contagion of the Example. But ſtill even in theſe caſes, our ſentence muſt not exceed the evidence, we muſt judg only according to the viſible undoubted circumſtances, and not aggravate the crime upon preſumtions and conjectures; if we do, how right ſoever our gueſſes may be, our judgment is not, but we are as St. *James* ſpeaks, *Judges of evil thoughts*, Chapter 2. v. 4.

This practice of judging is an invaſion of Gods right of Judicature.

Tis adviſable to remit all judgment of our neighbors to the great aſſize.

25. Indeed this raſh judging is not only very unjuſt both to God and man, but it is an act of the greateſt pride. When we ſet our ſelves in the Tribunal, we alwaies look down with contemt on thoſe at the Bar. And certainly there is nothing do's ſo gratify, ſo regal a haughty humor, as this piece of uſurpt Soveraignty over our Brethren: but the more it do's ſo, the greater neceſſity there is to abſtain from it. Pride is a hardy kind of vice, that will live upon the bareſt paſture: you cannot ſtarve it with the moſt induſtrious mortifications: how little need is there then of pampering and heightning it? which we cannot more effectually do, than by this cenſorious humor: for by that we are ſo perpetually emploi'd abroad, that we have no leiſure to look homeward, and ſee our own defects. We are like the inhabitants of *Ai*, *Joſhua* 8. ſo eager upon our purſuit of others, that we leave our ſelves expos'd to the ambuſhes of Satan, who will be ſure ſtill to encourage us in our chaſe, draw us ſtill farther and farther from our ſelves, and cares not how zealous we are in fighting againſt the crimes of others, ſo he can but keep that zeal from recoiling upon our own.

Cenſuring is the effect of Pride.

26. Laſtly this judging others is one of the higheſt violations of Charity. The Apoſtle gives it as one of the properties of that grace, that *it*

Is the higheſt violation of Charity.

thinks no evil (*i.e.*) is not apt to make ſevere conſtructions, but ſets every thing in the faireſt light, puts the moſt candid interpretations, that the matter will bear. And truly this is of great importance to the reputation of our neighbors. The world we know is in many inſtances extremely govern'd by opinion, but in this 'tis all in all; it has not only an influence upon it, but is that very thing: reputation being nothing but a fair opinion and eſtimation among others. Now this opinion is not alwaies ſwaied by due motives: ſomtimes little accidents, and often fancy, and ofteneſt prepoſſeſſion governs it. So that many times he that puts the firſt ill Character, fixes the ſtamp, which afterwards goes currant in the world. The generality of people take up prejudices (as they do religions) upon truſt: and of thoſe that are more curious in enquiring into the grounds, there are not many who vary on the more charitable hand, or bring the common ſentence to review with intent to moderate but, to inhance it. Men are apt to think it ſome diſparagement to their acuteneſs and invention, if they cannot ſay ſomthing as ſharp upon the ſubject, as hath bin ſaid before; and ſo 'tis the buſineſs of many to lay on more load, but of few to take off: and therefore he that paſſes the firſt condemnatory ſentence, is like the incendiary in a popular tumult, who is chargable with all thoſe diſorders to which he gave the firſt riſe, tho' that frees not his Abettors from the ſhare of the guilt.

And moſt inexcuſable partiality.

27. And as this is very uncharitable in reſpect of the injury offer'd, ſo alſo is it in reflection on the grand rule of Charity. Can we pretend to love our neighbor as our ſelves, and yet ſhall our love to him have the quite contrary effects to that we bear our ſelves? Can ſelf-love leſſen our beam into a mote, and yet can our love to him magnify his mote into a beam? No certainly, true Charity is more ſincere, do's not turn to us the reverſe end of the perſpective, to repreſent our own faults at a diſtance, and in the moſt diminutive ſize, and yet ſhuffle the other to us when we are to view his. No, theſe are Tricks of Legerdemain we learn in another School, even his whoſe ſtile is *the accuſer of the brethren.* We know how frequently God proteſts againſt falſe weights and falſe meſures. And ſure 'tis not only in the ſhop or market that he abhors them, they are no leſs abominable in converſation than in traffic. To buy by one meſure and ſell by another, is not more unequal, than it is to have theſe differing ſtandards for our own and our neighbors faults, that our own ſhall weigh, in the Prophet Jeremies Phraſe, *lighter than vanity, yea nothing*, and yet his (tho' really the lighter) ſhall prove *Zacharies* talent of lead. This is ſuch a partiality, as conſiſts not with common honeſty, and can therefore never be reconcil'd with Chriſtian Charity: and how demurely ſoever ſuch men may pretend to ſanctity, that interrogation of Gods preſſes hard upon them, *Shall I account them pure with the wicked ballances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? Micha* 6.11. Such bitter invectives againſt other mens faults, and indulgence or palliation of their own, ſhews their zeal lies in their ſpleen, and that they conſider not ſo much what is done, as who do's it: and to ſuch the ſentence of the Apoſtle is very applicable, *Rom.* 2. 1. *Therefore thou art inexcuſable, O man, whoſoever thou art that judgeſt, for wherein thou judgeſt another thou condemneſt thy ſelf, for thou that judgeſt doſt the ſame thing.* But admit a man have not the very ſame guilts he cenſures in another, yet 'tis ſure every man has ſome, and of what ſort ſoever they be, he deſires not they ſhould be rigorouſly ſcan'd; and therefore by the rule of Charity, yea and Juſtice too, ought not to do that which he would not ſuffer. If he can find ex-

tenuations for his own crimes, he is in all reaſon to preſume others may have ſo for theirs: the common frailty of our nature, as it is apt alike to betray us to faults, ſo it gives as equal ſhare in the excuſe; and therefore what I would have paſs for the effect of impotency or inadvertence in my ſelf, I can with no tolerable ingenuity give a worſe name to in him.

Detraction is as imprudent as it is unchriſtian.

28. We have now view'd both theſe branches of detraction, ſeen both the ſin and miſchiefs of them, we may now join them together in a concluding obſervation, which is, that they are as imprudent as they are unchriſtian. It has been receiv'd among the Maxims of civil life, not unneceſſarily to exaſperate any body; to which agrees the advice of an ancient Philoſopher, Speak not evil of thy neighbor, if thou do'ſt, thou ſhalt hear that which will not fail to trouble thee. There is no Perſon ſo inconſiderable, but may at ſome time or other do a diſpleſure: but in this of Defaming men need no harneſſing, no preparation; every man has his weapons ready for a return: ſo that none can ſhoot theſe arrows, but they muſt expect they will revert with a rebounded force, not only to the violation of Chriſtian Unity (as I have before obſerv'd) but to the Aggreſſors great ſecular detriment, both in fame, and oftentimes intereſt alſo. Revenge is ſharp-ſighted, and over-looks no opportunity of a retaliation, and that commonly not bounded as the Levitical ones were, *An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, Exod.* 21. 24. no nor by the larger proportions of their reſtitutions *four-fold, Exod.* 22. 1. but extended to the utmoſt power of the inflicter. The examples are innumerable of men who have thus laid themſelves open in their greateſt concerns, and have let looſe the Hands as well as Tongues of others againſt them, merely becauſe they would put no reſtraint upon their own: which is ſo great indiſcretion, that to them we may well apply that of *Solomon, A fools mouth is his deſtruction, and his lips are the ſnare of his ſoul.*

This generally prevailing practice, would excuſe it ſelf, by the pretence of zeal againſt vice.

29. And now who can ſufficiently wonder, that a practice that ſo thwarts our intereſt of both worlds, ſhould come univerſally to prevail among us? Yet that it do's ſo, I may appeal to the conſciences of moſt, and to the obſervation of all. What ſo common Topic of diſcourſe is there, as this of back-biting our Neighbors? Come into company of all Ages, all Ranks, all Profeſſions, this is the conſtant entertainment: And I doubt he that at night ſhall duly recollect the occurrences of the day, ſhall very rarely be able to ſay, he has ſpent it without hearing or ſpeaking (perhaps both) ſomwhat of this kind. Nay even thoſe who reſtrain themſelves other liberties, are often apt to indulge to this: many who are ſo juſt to their neighbors property, that as *Abraham* once ſaid, *Gen.* 14. 23. *they would not take from him, even from a thred to a ſhoe latchet*, are yet ſo inconſiderate of his Fame, as to find themſelves diſcourſe at the expence of that, tho' infinitly a greater injury than the robbing of his Coffer: which ſhews what falſe meſures we are apt to take of things, and evinces that many of thoſe, who have not only in general abjur'd the world in their Baptiſm, but do in many inſtances ſeem to themſelves (as well as others) to have gain'd a Superiority over it; do yet in this undiſcernably yield to it the greateſt Enſign of Soveraignty, by permitting it to ſet the ſtandards and eſtimates of things, and taking its cuſtomary Preſcriptions for Laws. For what beſides this unhappy ſervility to cuſtom, can poſſibly reconcile men that own Chriſtianity, to a practice ſo widely diſtant from it? 'Tis true, thoſe that profeſs themſelves men of this world, who deſign only their portion in this life, may take it up as

ſomtimes conducing (at leaſt ſeemingly) to their end: but for thoſe who propoſe higher hopes to themſelves, and know that Charity is one of the main props to thoſe hopes, how fooliſhly do they undermine themſelves, when they thus act againſt their principles, and that upon no other Autority, but that of popular uſage? I know men are apt to excuſe themſelves upon their indignation againſt vice, and think that their zeal muſt as well acquit them for this violation of the ſecond Table, as it once did *Moſes* for the breaking both, *Exod.* 32. 19. But to ſuch I may anſwer in Chriſt's words, *Luke* 9. 55. *Ye know what manner of ſpirit you are of.* Meekneſs and Charity are the Evangelical graces, which will moſt recommend and aſſimilate us to him, who was meek and lowly in heart. But after all this pretext of Zeal, I fear it is but a cheat we put on our ſelves, the Elder brothers raiment only to diſguiſe the ſupplanter, *Gen.* 27. Let men truly ranſack their own breaſts, and I doubt the beſt will find there is ſomthing of vanity which lies at the bottom, if it be not the poſitive ſort mention'd before of deſigning to illuſtrate my ſelf by others blemiſhes, yet at leaſt the negative, that I am unwilling to incur the contemt incident to thoſe who ſcruple at ſmall ſins. Beſides I obſerve perhaps that 'tis the common entertainment of the world, to defame their neighbors, and if I ſtrike not in upon that Theme, I ſhall have nothing to render me acceptable company; perhaps I ſhall be reproch'd as moroſe or dull, and my ſilence ſhall be conſtrued to proceed not from the abundance of my Charity, but the defect of my Wit.

And vainly ſets up for wit.

30. But ſure they that can thus argue, do hereby give a more demonſtrative proof of that defect. He whoſe wit is ſo precarious that it muſt depend only upon the folly or vice of another, had beſt give over all pretence to it. He that hath nothing of his own growth to ſet before his gueſts, had better make no invitations, than break down his neighbors encloſure, and feaſt them upon his plunder. Beſides, how pitiful an atteſtation of wit is it, to be able to make a diſgraceful relation of another? No ſcolding woman but may ſet up ſuch Trophies: and they that can value a man upon ſuch an account, may prefer the Scarabes, who feed upon dung, and are remark'd by no other property, before the Bee that ſucks flowers and returns honey.

Chriſtianity requires greater ſelf-denials than the reproch of wanting wit.

31. But in the next place admit this reſtraint ſhould certainly expoſe one to that reproch; methinks this ſhould be no news to thoſe who know the condition of Chriſtianity is to take up the Croſs: and ſure it cannot weigh lighter than in this inſtance. What am I the worſe if a vain Talkative Perſon think me too reſerv'd? Or if he, whoſe frolic levity is his diſeaſe, call me dull, becauſe I vapor not out all my ſpirits into froth? *Socrates* when inform'd of ſome derogating Speeches one had uſed of him behind his back, made only this facetious reply, Let him beat me too when I am abſent. And he that gets not ſuch an indifference to all the idle cenſures of men, will be diſturb'd in all his tranſactions, as well as his Chriſtian: it being ſcarce poſſible to do any thing, but there will be deſcants made on it. And if a man will regard thoſe winds, he muſt, as *Solomon* ſaies, *never ſow*, *Eccleſ.* 11. 4. He muſt ſuſpend even the neceſſary actions of common life, if he will not venture them to the being miſjudg'd by others.

He who upon the deſpicable motive of applauſe will commit one ſin, will commit more.

32. But there is yet farther conſideration in this matter: for he that upon ſuch a deſpicable motive will violate his duty in one particular, lets Satan get a main point of him, and can with no good Logic deny to do it in others. Detraction is not the only ſin in faſhion: Profaneſs, and

Obſcenity, and all ſorts of Luxury are ſo too, and threaten no leſs reproch to thoſe who ſcruple at them. Upon the ſame grounds therefore that he diſcards his Charity to his neighbor, he may alſo his Piety, his Modeſty, his Temperance, and almoſt all other Vertues. And to ſpeak the truth, there is not a more fertile womb of ſin, than this dread of ill mens reproch. Other corruptions muſt be gratifi'd with coſt and induſtry, but in this the Devil hath no farther trouble than to laugh men out of their ſouls. So prolific a vice therefore had need be weeded out of mens hearts: for if it be allowed the leaſt corner, if it be indulged to in this one inſtance, 'twill quickly ſpread it ſelf farther.

Hatred will rather be the effect of Defamation than applauſe.

33. Yet after all, this fear of reproch is a mere fallacy, ſtarted to diſguiſe a more real cauſe of fear: for the greater danger of reproch do's indeed lie on that other ſide. Common eſtimation puts an ill Character upon pragmatic medling people. For tho' the inquiſitiveneſs and curioſity of the hearer, may ſomtimes render ſuch diſcourſe grateful enough to him, yet it leaves in him no good impreſſion of the ſpeaker. This is well obſerv'd by the ſon of *Sirach, Eccleſ.* 19. 8, 9. *Whether it be to friend or foe, talk not of other mens lives; and if thou canſt without offence, reveal them not; for he heard and obſerv'd thee, and when time cometh he will hate thee.* In a word all conſidering Perſons will be ever upon the guard in ſuch company, as foreſeeing that they will talk no leſs freely of them, than they do of others before them. Nor can the commonneſs of the guilt obviat the cenſure, there being nothing more frequent than for men to accuſe their own faults in other Perſons. Vice is like a dark Lanthorn, which turns its bright ſide only to him that bears it, but looks black and diſmal in anothers hand: and in this particular none has ſo much reaſon to fear a Defamer, as thoſe who are themſelves ſuch: for (beſides the common prudential motive) their own conſciouſneſs gives them an inward alarm, and makes them look for a retribution in the ſame kind. Thus upon the whole matter we ſee, there is no real temtation, even to our vanity, to comply with this uncharitable cuſtom, we being ſure to loſe more repute by it than we can propoſe to our ſelves to gain. The being eſteem'd an ill man will not be ballanced by the being thought pleaſant ingenious company, were one ſure to be ſo. But 'tis odds that will not be acquired by it neither, for the moſt aſſiduous tale-bearers and bittereſt revilers are often half-witted people: there being nothing more frequently obſervable, than ſuch mens aptneſs to ſpeak evil of things they underſtand not, *Jude* v. 2.

Defamation is moſt ſcandalous when it proceeds from men otherwiſe vertuous.

34. O Let not then thoſe that have repudiated the more inviting ſins, ſhew themſelves philter'd and bewitch'd by this, but inſtead of ſubmiting to the ill example of others, ſet a good one to them, and endeavor to bring this unchriſtian cuſtom out of faſhion! I am ſure if they do not, they will be more deeply chargeable than others: for the more command they have over their other corruption, the more do they witneſs againſt themſelves. Their remiſneſs and willing ſubjection to this, beſides their example when ill, is more enſnaring than other mens, and is apt to inſinuate eaſy thoughts of the ſin. Men are apt to think themſelves ſafe while they follow one of noted piety, and the autority of his Perſon often leads them blindfold into his failings. Thus when *Peter* diſſembled, St. *Paul* tells us that the other *Jews, and even* Barnabas *alſo was carried away with his diſſimulation, Galat.* 2. 13. And I doubt not in this particular many are encourag'd by the liberty they ſee even good men take. So that ſuch have a more accumulative guilt, for they do not only commit,

mit, but patronize the fault: the conſideration whereof has kept me, I confeſs, longer upon this head than is proportionable to the brevity of the reſt; but I think not longer than agrees with the importance of the ſubject.

A ſin which do's ſo eaſily beſet, muſt with greater vigilance be reſiſted.

35. And now ſince we have conſidered the malignity of this ſin of detraction, and yet withall find that 'tis a ſin, which, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *doth ſo eaſily beſet us*, 'tis but a natural Corollary that we enforce our vigilance againſt it. And where the importance and difficulty are both ſo great, 'twill be a little neceſſary to conſider what are the likelieſt means, the moſt appropriate Antidote againſt this ſo dangerous, and yet ſo Epidemic a diſeaſe.

This leproſy in the Tongue is to be cured not by topical applications, but alterative medicines.

36. And here the common rule of Phyſic is to be adverted to, *viz.* to examine the cauſes, that the remedies may be adapted to them. I ſhall therefore in the firſt place deſire every man ſeriouſly to ſtudy his own conſtitution of mind, and obſerve what are his particular temtations to this ſin of Detraction, whether any of thoſe I have before mention'd, as Pride, Envy, Levity, *&c.* or any other which lies deeper, and is only diſcernible to his own inſpection. Let him I ſay, make the ſcrutiny, and then accordingly apply himſelf to correct the ſin in its firſt principle. For as when there is an eruption of Humor in any part, 'tis not cured merely by outward applications, but by ſuch alterative Medicines as purify the blood; ſo this Leproſy of the Tongue will ſtill ſpread farther, if it be not check'd in its Spring and Source by the mortifying of thoſe corrupt inclinations, which feed and heighten it.

In all Detraction there is ſome mixture of Pride.

37. This is an inquiſition I muſt leave to every mans own Conſcience, which alone can teſtify by what impulſes he acts. Yet as the Rabbies were wont to ſay, that in every Signal Judgment which befel the Jews, there was ſome grain of the Golden Calf: ſo I think I may venture to ſay, that in all detraction, there is ſome mixture of Pride: and therefore I ſuppoſe a Caution againſt that, will be ſo generally ſeaſonable, that it may well lead the Van of all other advices in this matter. And here 'tis very obſervable, that God who has *made of one blood all Nations of the Earth, Acts* 17. has ſo equally diſtributed all the moſt valuable priviledges of Human nature, as if he deſign'd to preclude all inſulting of one man over another. Neither has he only thus inſinuated it by his Providence, but has enforc'd it by his commands. In the Levitical Law we find what a particular care he takes to moderate the vigor of Judicial correction, upon this very account, leſt *thy brother be deſpiſed in thine eies, Deut.* 25. 3. So unreaſonable did he think it, that the crime or miſery of one, ſhould be the exultation of another. And St. *Paul* brands it as a great guilt of the *Corinthians*, that they upon the occaſion of the inceſtuous Perſon *were puffed up, when they ſhould have mourned*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 2. When we ſee a dead Corps, we are not apt to inſult over it, or brag of our own health and vigor; but it rather damps us, and makes us reflect, that it may (we know not how ſoon) be our own condition. And certainly the Spectacles of Spititual morality ſhould have the ſame operation. We have the ſame principle of Corruption with our lapſed Brethren, and have nothing but Gods grace, to ſecure us from the ſame effects, and by theſe inſulting reflections forfeit that too: for *he gives grace only to the humble, James* 4. 6. St. *Paul*'s advice therefore is very appoſite to this caſe, *Gal.* 6. 1. *Brethren if any man be overtaken in a fault, reſtore ſuch a one in the ſpirit of Meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be temted.* In a word the falls of others ought to excite our pity towards them, our

caution as to our ſelves, and our thankfulneſs to God, if he hath hitherto preſerv'd us from the like, *For who made thee to differ from another?* 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. But if we ſpread our Sails, and triumph over theſe wrecks, we expoſe our ſelves to worſe. Other ſins like Rocks may ſplit us, yet the lading may be preſerv'd; but Pride like a Gulph ſwallows us up: our very vertues when ſo levened, becoming weights and plummets to ſink us to the deeper ruin. The counſel therefore of the Apoſtle, is very pertinent to this matter, *Rom.* 11. 20. *Be not high minded, but fear.*

In all temtations to detraction, it ought to be the firſt reflection if we are not likewiſe obnoxious.

38. But God knows we can inſult over others when we are not only under a poſſibility, but are actually involv'd in the ſame guilt: and then what are all our accuſations and bitter cenſures of others, but indictments and condemnatory ſentences againſt our ſelves? And we may juſtly expect God ſhould take us at our word, and reply upon us as the Prophet did upon *David, Thou art the man.* For tho' our officious vehemence againſt anothers crime, may blind the eyes of men, yet God is not ſo mock'd: as therefore when a thief or murderer is detected, it gives an alarm to the whole confederacy; ſo when we find our own guilts purſu'd in other mens Perſons, 'tis not a time for us to join in the proſecution, but rather by humble and penitent reflections on our ſelves to provide for our own ſafety. When therefore we find our ſelves (upon any miſdemeanor of our brother) ready to mount the tribunal, and pronounce our ſentence, let us firſt conſider how competent we are for the office, calling to mind the deciſion Chriſt once made in the like caſe, *He that is without ſin, let him firſt caſt a ſtone, John* 8. 7. And if we did this, many perhaps of our fierceſt impeachers, would think fit to retire and leave the delinquent (as they themſelves finally deſire to be) to the merciful indulgence of a Savior. In ſhort, would we but look into our own hearts, we ſhould find ſo much work for our inquiſition and cenſure, that we ſhould not be at leiſure to ramble abroad for it. And therefore as *Lycurgus* once ſaid to one, who importun'd him to eſtabliſh a popular parity in the State, Do thou, ſaies he, begin it firſt in thine own family; ſo I ſhall adviſe thoſe that will be judging, to practice firſt at home. And if they will confine themſelves to that, till there be nothing left to correct, I doubt not their neighbor will be well enough ſecur'd againſt their Detractions.

'Twill alſo import, to conſider the future judgment.

39. Another preſervation againſt that ſin is the frequent contemplation of the laſt and great Judgment. This is indeed a Catholicon againſt all: but we find it particularly appli'd by St. *Paul* to this, of judging and deſpiſing our Brethren, *Why doſt thou judg thy brother? or why doſt thou ſet at nought thy brother? We ſhall all ſtand before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt. Rom.* 14. 10. That is the great day of Revelation and Retribution, and we are not to anticipate that by our private inqueſt or ſentences: we have buſineſs enough to provide our own accounts againſt that day. And as it were a ſpightful folly for Malefactors that were going together to the bar, to ſpend their time in exaggerating each others crimes; ſo ſurely it is for us, who are all going toward that dreadful tribunal, to be drawing up Charges againſt one another. And who knows but we may then meet with the fate of *Daniel*'s accuſers, ſee him we cenſur'd, acquitted, and our ſelves doom'd. The penitence of the criminal may have number'd him among the Saints, when our unretracted uncharitableneſs may ſend us to unquenchable Flames. I conclude this conſideration with the words of St. *James, There is one Law-giver who is able to ſave and to deſtroy, who art thou that judgeſt another? James* 4. 12.

If we muſt talk of others faults, let it be not to Defame, but admoniſh.

40. A third expedient may be, to try to make a revulſion of the humor, to draw it into another channel. If we muſt needs be talking of other peoples faults,let it not be to Defame,but to amend them,by converting our Detraction and back-biting into Admonition and fraternal Correption. This is a way to extract medicine out of the viper, to conſecrate even this ſo unhallow'd a part of our temper, and to turn the ungrateful medling of a buſy-body, into the moſt obliging office of a friend. And indeed had we that zeal for vertue, which we pretend when we inveigh againſt vice, we ſhould ſurely lay it out this way, for this only gives a poſſibility of reforming the offender. But alaſs we order the matter ſo, as if we fear'd to looſe the occaſion of Clamor, and will tell all the world but him that it moſt concerns. Indeed 'tis a deplorable thing to ſee how univerſally this neceſſary Chriſtian duty is neglected; and to that neglect we may in a great degree impute that ſtrange overflowing of Detraction among us. We know the receiving any thing into our Charge, inſenſibly begets a love and tenderneſs to it (a Nurſe upon this account comes often to vie kindneſs with the Mother:) and would we but take one another thus into our care, and by friendly vigilance thus watch over each others ſouls, 'tis ſcarce imaginable what an indearment it would create: ſuch certainly as would infallibly ſupplant all our unkind reportings, and ſevere deſcants upon our brethren; ſince thoſe can never take place, but when there is at leaſt an indifference, if not an enmity.

A farther remedy will be to ſuppreſs Curioſity.

41. The next cure I ſhall propoſe for Detraction,is to ſubſtract its nouriſhment, by ſuppreſſing all Curioſity and inquiſitiveneſs concerning others. Were all Supplies thus cut off, it would at laſt be ſubdued. The King of *Ethiopia* in a vie of Wit with the King of *Egypt*, propos'd it as a Problem to him, to drink up the Sea, to which he repli'd, by requiring him firſt to ſtop the acceſs of Rivers to it: and he that would drain this other Ocean, muſt take the ſame courſe, dam up the avenues of thoſe Springs which feed it. He that is alwaies upon the ſcent, hunting out ſome diſcovery of others, will be very apt to invite his neighbors to the Quarry; and therefore 'twill be neceſſary for him, to reſtrain himſelf from that range: not like jealous States, to keep Spies and Penſioners abroad to bring him intelligence; but rather diſcourage all ſuch officious pick-thanks: for the fuller he is of ſuch informations, the more is his pain if he keep them in, and his guilt if he publiſh them. Could men be perſwaded to affect a wholſome ignorance in theſe matters, it would conduce both to their eaſe and innocence: for 'tis this Itch of the Ear, which breaks out at the Tongue: and were not Curioſity the Purveior, Detraction would ſoon be ſtarv'd into a tameneſs.

The making our neighbors condition our own, is a farther remedy.

42. But the moſt infallible receit of all,is the frequent recollecting,and ſerious applying of the grand rule, of doing as we would be done to: for as Detraction is the violation of that, ſo the obſervation of that muſt certainly ſupplant Detraction. Let us therefore when we find the humor fermenting within us, and ready to break out in Declamations againſt our Brethren, Let us, I ſay, check it with this ſhort queſtion, Would I my ſelf be thus us'd? This voice from within, will be like that from heaven to St. *Paul*, which ſtopt him in the height of his carrier, *Acts* 9. 4. And this voice every man may hear, that will not ſtop his ears, or gag his conſcience, it being but the Echo of that native Juſtice and Equity which is implanted in our hearts: and when we have our remedy ſo near us, and will not uſe it, God may well expoſtulate with us, as he did with the Jews, *Why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* Ezra 33. 11.

43. Theſe are ſome of thoſe many receits which may be preſcrib'd againſt this ſpreading diſeaſe. But indeed there is not ſo much need to multiply remedies, as to perſwade men to apply them. We are in love with our Malady, and as loth to be cured of the Luxury of the Tongue, as St. *Auguſtine* was of his other Senſuality, againſt which he praied with a Caveat, that he might not be too ſoon hear'd. But 'tis ill dallying, where our Souls are concern'd: for alas 'tis they that are wounded by thoſe darts, which we throw at others. We take our aim perhaps at our Neighbors, but indeed hit our ſelves: herein verifying in the higheſt Senſe that Axiom of the Wiſe man, *He that diggeth a pit, ſhall fall into it; and he that rolleth a ſtone, it ſhall return upon him, Prov.* 26. 27. If therefore we have no tenderneſs, no relentings to our Brethren, yet let us have ſome to our ſelves, ſo much compaſſion, nay ſo much reſpect to our precious immortal Souls, as not to ſet them at ſo deſpicable a price, to put them in balance with the ſatisfying of a petulant peeviſh vanity. Surely the ſhewing our ſelves ill-natur'd (which is all the gains Detraction amounts to) is not ſo enamouring a deſign, that we ſhould ſacrifice to it our higheſt intereſt. 'Tis too much to ſpend our breath in ſuch a purſuit, O let not our Souls alſo exhale in the vapor, but let us rather pour them out in Praiers for our Brethren, than in accuſations of them: for tho' both the one and the other will return into our own boſoms, yet God knows to far differing purpoſes, even as differing as thoſe wherewith we utter them. The Charity of the one like kindly exhalations will deſcend in ſhowers of bleſſings, but the rigor and aſperity of the other, in a ſevere doom upon our ſelves: for the Apoſtle will tell us, *He ſhall have judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy, James* 2. 13.

The greateſt difficulty is to be in earneſt in the deſire of a cure.

SECT. VII.

Of Scoffing and Deriſion.

1. THERE is alſo another fault of the Tongue injurious to our Neighbor, and that is Deriſion and Mockery; the ſtriving to render others as ridiculous and contemtible as we can. This in reſpect of the ſubject matter differs from the other of Detraction, as much as folly or deformity do's from vice: yet ſince injuries as well as benefits are to be meſured by common eſtimation, this may come in balance with the other. There is ſuch a general averſation in human nature to contemt, that there is ſcarce any thing more exaſperating. I will not deny but the exceſs of that averſation may be level'd againſt Pride, yet ſure ſcorn and diſdain never ſprung from Humility, and therefore are very incompetent Correctors of the other; ſo that it may be ſaid of that, as once it was of *Diogenes*, that he trampled on *Plato's* Pride with greater of his own.

Scoffing has folly and deformity for its object, as Detraction has vice.

2. Nor is this injury enhanced only by the reſentment of the ſufferer, but alſo by the way of inflicting it. We generally think thoſe are the ſevereſt marks of infamy, which are the moſt indelible. To be burnt in the hand or Pilloried, is a more laſting reproch than to be ſcourged or confin'd; and it is the ſame in this caſe, for here commonly Wit is the Lictor, which is arm'd with an edg'd tool, and leaves ſcars behind it.

A ſcoff imprints indelible Characters.

The reproch of rage and fury ſeem to be writ in Chalk or Lead, which a diſpaſſionate hearer eaſily wipes out, but thoſe of Wit are like the Gravers burine upon Copper, or the corrodings of Aqua-fortis, engrave and indent the Characters that they can never be defaced. The truth of this daily experience atteſts. A dull contumely quickly vaniſhes, no body thinking it worth remembring; but when 'tis ſteel'd with Wit, it pierces deep, leaves ſuch impreſſions in the fancy of the hearers, that thereby it gets rooting in the mémory, and will ſcarce be eradicated: nay ſomtimes it happens to ſurvive both ſpeaker and hearer, and conveigh's it ſelf to poſterity; it being not unuſual for the ſarcaſms of Wit to be tranſmitted in ſtory. And as it thus gives an edg, ſo alſo do's it add wings to a reproch, makes it fly abroad in an inſtant. Many a poor mans infirmities had bin confin'd to the notice of a few Relations or Neighbors, had not ſome remarkable ſtrein of Drollery ſcatter'd and diſpers'd them. The jeſt recommends the Defamation, and is commonly ſo incorporate with it, that they cannot be related apart. And even thoſe who like it not in one reſpect, yet are many times ſo tranſported with it in the other, that they chuſe rather to propagate the contumely, than ſtifle the conceit. Indeed Wit is ſo much the *Diana* of this age, that he who goes about to ſet any bounds to it muſt expect an *uproar*, *Acts* 19. 28. or at leaſt to be judged to have impoſed an envious inhibition on it, becauſe himſelf has not ſtock enough to maintain the trade. But however ſharp or unexpected the cenſure may ſeem to be, yet 'tis neceſſary that plain downright truth ſhould ſomtimes be ſpoken, and I think that will bear me out, if I ſay that 'tis poſſible men may be as oppreſſive by their parts, as their power; and that God did no more deſign the meaner intellectuals of ſome for triumphs to the Pride and Vanity of the more acute, than he did the poſſeſſions of the leſs powerfull, as a prey to the rapine and avarice of the mighty.

Quickneſs of Wit cannot be more perverted, than in Deriſion.

3. And this ſuggeſts a yet farther aggravation of this ſin, as it is a perverting of Gods deſign; and abuſe of the talent he has committed to their truſt. Ingenuity and quickneſs of parts, is ſure to be reckon'd in the higheſt ranks of Bleſſings, an inſtrument proper for the moſt excellent purpoſes; and therefore we cannot ſuppoſe the Divine wiſdom, ſo much ſhort of Human, as not in his intention to aſſign it to uſes worthy of it. Thoſe muſt relate either to God, our ſelves, or our Neighbors. In reſpect of God, it renders us more capable of contemplating his Perfections, diſcerning the Equity and Excellence of his Laws, and our obligations to obedience. In regard of our Selves, it makes us apprehend our own intereſt in that obedience; makes us tractable and perſwaſible, contrary to that Brutiſh ſtubborneſs of the *Horſe and Mule*, which the Pſalmiſt reproches, *Pſal.* 32. 9. Beſides it accommodates us in all the concerns of Human life, forms it ſelf into all thoſe uſeful contrivances, which may make our being here more comfortable: eſpecially it renders a man company to himſelf, and in the greateſt dearth of Society, entertains him with his own thoughts. Laſtly, as to our Neighbors, it renders us uſeful and aſſiſtant. All thoſe diſcoveries and experiments, thoſe Arts and Sciences, which are now the common treſure of the world, took their firſt riſe from the ingenuity of particular Perſons: and in all Perſonal exigencies wherein any of us are at any time involv'd, we need not be told the uſefulneſs of a wiſe adviſer. Now all theſe are emploiments commenſurable to the faculty from whence they flow, and that anſwer its excellence and value; and he that ſo beſtows his talent, gives a

good account of his truſt. But I would fain know under which of theſe Heads Deriſion of our Neighbors comes in: certainly not under that of being aſſiſtant to him. It would be a ſorry relief to a poor indigent wretch, to laviſh out wit upon him, in upbraiding of his miſery. And is not this a parallel caſe? Is it not the ſame Barbariſm, to mock and reproch a man that wants the gifts of Nature, as him that wants thoſe of Fortune? Nay perhaps it may be more; for a Beggar may have impoveriſht himſelf by his own fault, but in Natural defects there is nothing to be charged, unleſs we will fly higher, and arraign that Providence that hath ſo diſpenſed. In a word, as the Superfluities of the Rich are by God aſſign'd as the Store-houſe of the Poor, ſo the Abilities of the Wiſe are of the Ignorant: for 'tis a great miſtake, to think our ſelves Stewards in ſome of Gods gifts, and Proprietors in others. They are all equally to be emploied, according to the deſignation of the Donor, and there is nothing more univerſally deſign'd by him, than that mankind ſhould be equally helpful to one another. Thoſe therefore whom God hath bleſt with higher degrees of ſagacity and quickneſs, ought not to look down on others as the objects of their contemt and ſcorn, but rather of their care and pity, endeavouring to reſcue them from thoſe miſchiefs, to which their weakneſs may expoſe them, remembring ſtill, that God might have changed the Scene, and made themſelves what they ſee others. It is part of *Job*'s juſtification of his integrity, that he was *eies to the Blind, and feet to the Lame, Job* 29. 15. (*i.e.*) he accommodated his aſſiſtances to all the wants and exigencies of others: and ſure 'tis no leſs the part of a good man to do it in the Mental than in the Corporeal defects.

Laughing is as much the property of the Idiot as of the Wit.

4. But alas many of us would rather put a ſtumbling block in the way of the Blind, pull away the Crutch from the Lame, that we may ſport our ſelves to ſee them tumble: ſuch a ſenſuality we have in obſerving and improving the imperfections of others, that it is become the grand excellence of the Age to be Dextrous at it, and Wit ſerves ſome men for little elſe. We are got indeed into a merry world, Laughing is our main buſineſs; as if becauſe it has bin made part of the Definition of a man, that he is Riſible, his manhood conſiſted in nothing elſe. But alas if that be all the uſe men have of their underſtandings, they were given them to little purpoſe, ſince mere Idiots can laugh with as much pleſure, and more innocence than they; and it is a great inſtance how extremes may be brought to meet, that the exceſs of Wit in the one, and of Folly in the other, ſerve but to produce the ſame effect.

Deriſion goes on to make ſerиouſneſs and ſobriety to be foppery: and then ſcoff at them.

5. Yet ſo voracious in this humor now grown, that it draws in every thing to feed it. There is not game enough from the real folly of the world, and therefore that which is the moſt diſtant from it muſt be ſtampt with its mark. 'Tis a known ſtory of the Friar, who on a faſting day bid his Capon be Carp, and then very Canonically eat it; and by ſuch a tranſubſtantiating power our Wits bid all ſeriouſneſs and conſideration be formality and foppery, and then under that name endeavor to hunt it out of the world. I fear moral honeſty fares not better with ſome of them than moral prudence. The old Philoſophical vertues of Juſtice, Temperance, and Chaſtity, are now hiſt off the ſtage, as fit only for that Antiquated ſet of Actors; and he that appears in that Equipage, is by many thought more ridiculous, than he that walks the ſtreet in his Anceſtors trunk-hoſe. Nay indeed vice it ſelf is ſcarce ſecure if it have not the grand accompliſhment of impudence: a pure bluſhing ſinner is to be

laught out of his Modeſty, tho' not out of his ſin; and to be proof againſt their ſcorns, he muſt firſt be ſo againſt all the regrets of his own mind.

Nor do's it ſtop there, but flies in the face of piety.

6. And if mere Ethnic vertue, or ſhamefac'd vice have this treatment, Chriſtian Piety muſt expect worſe: & ſo indeed it finds, its Profeſſors being beyond all others expos'd to their ſcorn and contemt. Nor is it ſtrange it ſhould be ſo, ſuch men being *made*, as it is *Wiſd.* 2. 14. *to reprove their waies*, they think in their own defence they are to deride theirs. This is it indeed which gives a ſecret ſting and venom to their reproches: other men they abuſe as an exerciſe of their Wit, but theſe in defence of their Party. So *Julian* after his Apoſtacy, thought it a more effectual way to perſecute the Chriſtians by taunts and ironies, than by racks and tortures, as thinking it more poſſible to ſhame, than fright them out of their Religion. And the ſtratagem ſeems to have bin reaſſumed by many in this age, and I fear with too great ſucceſs: for I doubt not there are divers who have herded themſelves amongſt theſe profane Scoffers, not that they are convinced by their reaſons, but terrified by their contumelies; and as ſome *Indians* are ſaid to worſhip the Devil, that he may not hurt them, ſo theſe chuſe to be active, that they may not be paſſive in the contemts flung upon Religion: ſuch men forget the dreadful denunciation of Chriſt againſt thoſe that ſhall *be aſhamed of him and his words*, *Matth.* 8. 38.

This entertainment the Prophets and Apoſtles and our Savior had from the world.

7. As for thoſe who, upon a juſter eſtimate, find the advantages of Piety worthy to be choſen, and take it with all its acceſſory ignominies, they have the encouragement of very good company in their ſufferings. The Pſalmiſt long ago had his ſhare, when not only *Thoſe that ſate in the gate ſpake againſt him, but the drunkards made ſongs upon him*, Pſal. 69. 12. 'Twas alwaies the Prophet *Jeremies* complaint, *I am in Deriſion daily, every one mocketh me*, *Jer.* 20. 7. Nay our bleſſed Lord himſelf was derided in his life by the Phariſees, *Luke* 16. 14. mockcd and reviled at his death by the Prieſts, the Elders, the Souldiers, nay by caſual Paſſengers, *Matth.* 27. 39. And ſhall the ſervant think himſelf greater than his Lord? Shall a Chriſtian expect an immunity from what his Savior has born before him? (He that do's ſo, is too delicate a member for a crucified head.) No ſure, let us rather animate our ſelves, as the Apoſtle exhorts, by *conſidering him who* as well *deſpiſed the ſhame*, as *endured the croſs* for us, *Heb.* 12. 2. and who has not only given an example, but propoſed a reward, a Beatitude for thoſe who are *reviled for righteouſneſs ſake*, *Matth.* 5. 11. And when this is ſoberly ponder'd, 'twill ſure make it eaſy for us to reſolve with holy *David* in a like caſe, *I will be yet more vile*, 2 Sam. 6. 22.

Scoffing is a mean and ſcurrilous, as well as highly criminal practice.

8. But to return from this digreſſion to thoſe who thus unhappily employ their parts, let me propoſe to them, that they would borrow every day ſome few minutes from their mirth, and ſeriouſly conſider, whether this be (I need not ſay a Chriſtian, but) a manly exerciſe of their faculties. Alas when they have rallied out the day from one company to another, they may ſum up their account at night in the Wiſe mans ſimile, their *Laughter has bin like the crackling of thorns under a pot*, Eccleſ. 7. 6. made a little brisk noiſe for the preſent, and with the ſparkles perhaps annoied their Neighbors, but what real good has it brought to themſelves? All that they can fancy is but the repute of Wit: but ſure that may be more attainable ſome other way. We find the world affected to new things, and this of Deriſion and abuſe of others is ſo beaten a road, that perhaps the very variety of a new way would render it acceptable. They are the lighter

ſubſtances that ſtill ſwim away with the ſtream, the greater and more ſolid bodies do ſometimes ſtop the current: and ſure 'twere a noble eſſay of a mans parts to ſtem this tide, and by a more uſeful application of their own faculties, convince others that theirs might be better emploi'd. 'Tis ſaid of *Anacharſis*, that at a feaſt he could not be got to ſmile at the affected railleries of common Jeſters, but when an ape was brought in he freely laught, ſaying, an ape was ridiculous by nature, but men by art and ſtudy. And truly 'tis a great contemt of human nature to think their intellects were given them for no better end, than to raiſe that laughter which a brute can do as well or better.

There may be innocent skirmiſhes of wit, but then they muſt not fight at ſharps.

9. I would not be thought to recommend ſuch a Stoical ſowerneſs, as ſhall admit of nothing of the chearful pleaſant part of Converſation. God has not ſure bin more rigid to our Minds than to our Bodies: and as he has not ſo devoted the one to toil, but that he allows ſome time to exerciſe them in recreation as well as labor, ſo doubtleſs he indulges the ſame relaxation to our Minds, which are not alwaies to be ſcrued up to the height, but allowed to deſcend to thoſe eaſineſſes of Converſe, which entertain the lower faculties of the Soul. Nor do I think thoſe are ill emploi'd in thoſe little skirmiſhes of Wit, which paſſes familiarly between intimates and acquaintances, which beſides the preſent divertiſment, ſerve to whet and quicken the Fancy. Yet I conceive this liberty is to be bounded with ſome cautions: as firſt in theſe encounters, the Charge ſhould be powder not Bullets, there ſhould nothing be ſaid, that ſhould leave any ungrateful impreſſions, or give any umbrage of a ſpightful intent. The world wants not experiments of the miſchiefs have hapned by too ſevere Railleries: in ſuch Fencings jeſt hath proved earneſt, and Florets have turn'd to Swords, and not only the Friendſhip, but the men have fallen a Sacrifice to a Jeſt.

Alſo it muſt be diverſion, not trade.

10. Secondly this is to have the ſame reſtriction with all other recreations, that it be made a divertiſement, not a trade. 'Tis an inſinuating thing, and is apt to encroach too much upon our time, and God knows we have a great deal of buſineſs in this world, and much more for the next, which will not be done with laughing: and therefore 'tis not for us to play away too much of that time, which is exacted by more ſerious concerns. 'Tis ſure we ſhall die in Earneſt, and it will not become us, to live altogether in Jeſt. But beſides this ſtealth of our time, 'tis apt to ſteal away mens hearts too, make them dote ſo upon this kind of entertainment, that it averts them from any thing more ſerious. I believe I may appeal to ſome who have made this their buſineſs, whether it go not againſt the hair with them to ſet to any thing elſe, and having eſpouſed this as their own excellence, they are willing to decry all others, that they may the more value themſelves upon this. By this means it is, that the gift of Raillery has in this age, like the lean Kine, devoured all the more ſolid worthy qualifications, and is counted the moſt reputable accompliſhment. A ſtrange inverted eſtimate, thus to prefer the little ebullitions of Wit, before ſolid reaſon and judgment. If they would accommodate their Diet at the ſame rate, they would eat the Husk, rather than the Kernel, and drink nothing but froth and bubbles. But after all, Wiſdom is commonly at long running juſtified even of her Deſpiſers; theſe great Idolaters of Wit often daſhing themſelves upon ſuch Rocks, as make them too late wiſh their Sails had bin leſs, and their Ballaſt more. For the preventing therefore of more ſuch wrecks, I wiſh the preſent caution may be more

adverted to, not to beſtow an unproportionable part of our time or value on this ſlight exerciſe of mans ſlighteſt Faculty.

Alſo confin'd to perſons preſent.

11. A third Caution in this matter, is to confine our ſelves to preſent Company, not to make abſent Perſons the ſubject of our mirth. Thoſe freedoms we uſe to a mans face, as they are commonly more moderate, ſo they are more equitable, becauſe we expoſe our ſelves to the like from him; but the back-blows are diſingenuous, and give ſuſpicion we intend not a fair trial of Wit, but a cowardly murder of a mans fame. 'Twas the precept of the Philoſopher, *Deride not the abſent*, and I think it may well be ſo of the Politician: there being nothing more imprudent as to our civil concerns than the contrary liberty. For thoſe things never die in the company they are firſt vented in (nay perhaps the hearer is not willing his wit ſhould ſo ſoon expire;) and when they once take air, they quickly come to the notice of the derided Perſon, and then nothing in the world is more diſobliging. 'Twas a ſober precept given one, not ſo much as to laugh in compliance with him that derides another, for you will be hated by him he derides. And if an acceſſary be hated, ſure much more the principal: and I think I may ſay there are many can ſooner forgive a ſolemn deep contrivance againſt them, than one of their jocular reproches: for he that deſigns, ſeems to acknowledg them conſiderable, but he that mocks them, ſeems to think them too low for any thing but contemt: and we learn from *Ariſtotle*, that the meſure of anger is entirely taken thence, men being ſo far provoked, as they imagine they were ſlighted or affronted. In mere ſecular wiſdom it will therefore become men to conſider, whether this trade be like to turn to account, or whether it be worth the while, at once to make a jeſt and an enemy.

Scoffing has this reward that it makes God and men its enemies.

12. And if it be imprudent to make man our enemy, 'tis much more to make God ſo by levelling our blows at any thing ſacred: but of that I have already had occaſion to ſpeak, and ſhall not repete; only give me leave to ſay, that beſides the profaner ſorts of jeſts, which more immediately reflect on him, he is concern'd in all the unjuſt reproches of our brethren, our love to them being confirm'd by the ſame divine Sanction with our reverence to him: and ſure nothing is more inconſiſtent with that love, than the expoſing them to that contemt we are our ſelves ſo impatient of. In a word, what repute ſoever this practice now has of Wit, it is very far from wiſdom to provoke God that we may alſo diſoblige man: and if we will take the Scripture eſtimate, we ſhall find a Scorner is no ſuch honourable an Epithet as we ſeem to account it. *Solomon* do's almoſt conſtantly ſet it in oppoſition to a Wiſe man: thus it is, *Prov.* 9. 8. and again Cap. 13. 1. and many other places; and on the other ſide, cloſely links it with the Fool: and that not only in title but in puniſhment too, *Judgments are prepared for ſcorners, and ſtripes for the back of fools*, Prov. 19. 29. So that if our Wits think not *Solomon* too dull for their Cabal, we ſee what a turn he will give to their preſent verdict.

Eſpecially when beyond the oſtentation of wit, it deſigns the doing miſchief.

13. And if theſe reproches, which aim only at oſtentation of Wit, be ſo unjuſtifiable, what ſhall we ſay to thoſe, that are drawn with blacker lines, that are founded in Malice and Envy, or ſome undermining deſign? Every man that is to be ſupplanted cannot always be attaqued with a down right battery: perhaps his integrity may be ſuch, that, as 'twas ſaid of *Daniel* Chap. 6. 4. *they can find no occaſion againſt him:* and when they cannot ſhake the main Fort, they muſt try if they can poſſeſs themſelves of the out-works, raiſe ſome prejudice againſt his diſcretion,

his humor, his carriage, and his moſt extrinſic adherence, and if by repreſenting him ridiculous in any of theſe they can but abate mens reverence to him, their confidence of him will not long hold out: bare honeſty without ſome other adornment, being lookt on as a leaf-leſs tree, no body will truſt himſelf to its ſhelter. Thus the enemies of *Socrates*, when they could no other waies ſuppreſs his reputation, hired *Ariſtophanes* a Comic Poet to perſonate him on the ſtage, and by the inſinuation of thoſe interludes, inſenſibly conveied firſt a contemt, then a hatred of him into the hearts of the people. But I need not bring inſtances of former times in this matter, theſe being ſufficiently verſt in that myſtery.

Hereby wit is put to the vile office of being hang-man to malice.

14. It is not ſtrange that men of ſuch deſigns, ſhould ſummon all their Wit to the ſervice, make their Railleries as picquant as they can, that they may wound the deeper: but me thinks 'tis but a mean office they aſſign their Wit, to be (I will not ſay the Pander, that being in this age ſcarce a title of reproch, but) the executioner or hangman to their malice. Chriſt bids us *be wiſe as Serpents*, yet adds withal *harmleſs as Doves*; but here the Serpent has quite eat up the Dove, and puts a Vulture in the place, a creature of ſuch ſagacity and diligence in purſuit of the prey, that 'tis hard for any art or innocence to eſcape its talons.

The moſt inſipid Scoffers, are the ſupercilious and faſtidious.

15. There is yet another ſort of Contumelious Perſons, who indeed are not chargeable with that circumſtance, of ill employing their Wit, for they uſe none in it. Theſe are people whoſe ſole talent is Pride and Scorn; who perhaps have attained the Sciences of dreſſing themſelves fine, and eating well, and upon the ſtrength of thoſe excellencies, look faſtidiouſly, and ſpeak diſdainfully of any who want them, concluding if a man fall ſhort of their Garniture at the Knees and Elbowes, he is much inferior to them in the Furniture of his Head. Such people think crying, Oh ridiculous! is an ample Confutation of any thing can be ſaid, and ſo they can but deſpiſe enough, are contented not to be able to ſay why they do ſo. Theſe are, I confeſs, the moſt innocent kind of Deriders in reſpect of others, what they ſay having not edg enough to cauſe any ſmart. The greateſt hurt they do is to themſelves, who tho' they much need, yet are generally little capable of a reſcue, and therefore I ſhall not clog the preſent diſcourſe, with any advice to them: I ſhall chuſe rather to conclude, with enforcing my Suit to the former, that they would ſoberly and ſadly weigh the account they muſt one Day give of the emploiment of their Parts, and the more they have hitherto embeazled them, the more to endeavor to expiate that Unthriftineſs, by a more careful Managery for the future; that ſo inſtead of that vain, emty, vaniſhing Mirth they have courted here, they may find a real, full, and eternal Satisfaction in the Joy of their Lord.

SECT. VIII.

Of Flattery.

Flattery is the moſt fatal wound of the Tongue.

1. THE laſt of Verbal injuries to our Neighbor which I ſhall mention, is Flattery. This is indeed the fatalleſt wound of the Tongue, carries leaſt Smart, but infinitly more of Danger, and is as much inferior to the former, as a Gangrene is to a Gall or Scratch; this may be ſore and vexing, but that ſtupifying and deadly. Flattery is ſuch a Myſtery, ſuch a Riddle of iniquity, that its very ſoftneſſes are its cruelleſt rigor, its Balm

corrodes, and (to compriſe all in the Pſalmiſts excellent Deſcription) *its words are ſmoother than oil, and yet be they very ſwords,* Pſal. 56. 21.

As diſhonorable to the agent as miſcheivous to the patient.

2. But beſides the miſchiefs of it to the Patient, 'tis the moſt diſhonoring, the moſt vilifying thing to the Agent. I ſhall not need to impannel a Jury either of Moraliſts or Divines, every mans own breſt ſufficiently inſtructing him in the unworthineſs of it. 'Tis indeed a collective accumulative Baſeneſs, it being in its Elements a compound and a complex of the moſt ſordid, hateful qualities incident to Mankind. I ſhall inſtance in three, viz. Lying, Servility, and Treachery, which being deteſtably deform'd ſingle, muſt in Conjunction make up a loathſome Monſtrous guilt. Now tho' Flattery has two Branches, yet theſe lie ſo at the Root, as equally to influence both: for whether you take it as it is the giving of praiſe where it is not due, or the profeſſing of kindneſs which is not reall, theſe Properties are ſtill its Conſtitutive parts.

Lying is its Principal ingredient.

3. And firſt we may take Lying to be the very corner Stone of the Fabric; for take it away, and the Whole falls to the ground. A Paraſite would make but a lean trade of it, that ſhould confine himſelf to truth. For tho' 'tis poſſible ſo to order the manner and circumſtances, as to flatter even in the repreſenting a mans reall vertues to him, yet commonly if they do not falſify as to the kind, they are forc'd to do it as to the degree. Beſides as there are but few ſuch ſubjects of Flattery, ſo neither are men of that Worth ſo receptive of it. Such ſort of addreſſes are leſs dangerous to thoſe who have the perſpicuity to ſee thro' them: ſo that theſe Merchants are under a neceſſity of dealing with the more ignorant Chapmen, and with them their counterfeit wares will go off beſt. It is indeed ſtrange to conſider, with what groſs impudent falſhoods men of this trade will court their Patrons. How many in former ages have not only amaſt together all ſublunary excellences, but have even ranſacked heaven to ſupply their Flattery, Deified their Princes, and perſwaded them they were Gods, who at laſt found they were to die like men? And tho' this ſtrein be now out-dated, yet perhaps 'tis not that the vice is grown more modeſt, but that Atheiſm has rob'd it of that Topic. Thoſe that believe no God, would rather ſeem to annihilate than magnify the Perſon to whom they ſhould apply the title. But I do not find that the practice has any other bounds. A great mans vices ſhall ſtill be called vertues, his deformities, beauties, and his moſt abſurd follies, the height of ingenuity. Such a ſubtil Alchymiſt is this Paraſite, that he turns all he touches into gold, imaginary indeed as to the deluded Perſon, but oft-times reall to himſelf. Nor is Lying leſs material to the other part of Flattery, the Profeſſion of ſervice and kindneſs. This needs no evidencing, and to attemt it would be a ſelf-Confutation: for if thoſe Profeſſions be true, they are not Flattery; therefore if they be Flattery, they muſt needs be Lies. It will be almoſt as needleſs to expatiate on the Baſeneſs and meanneſs of that ſin; for tho' there is no Subject that affords more matter for Declamation, yet Lying is a thing that is aſhamed of it ſelf, and therefore may well be remitted to its own convictions. 'Tis *Ariſtotles* obſervation, that all Elements but the Earth, had ſome Philoſopher or other, that gave it his vote to be the firſt productive Principle of all things: and I think we may now ſay, that all Crimes have had their Abettors and fautors, ſome body that would ſtand up in their defence; only Lying is ſo much the dregs and refuſe of wickedneſs, that none has yet had Chimiſtry enough to ſublimate it, to bring it into ſuch a reputation, that any man will think fit to own it: the greater wonder that what is under ſo univerſal a

reproch, ſhould be ſo commonly admitted in practice. But by this we may make an eſtimate, what the whole body of Flattery is, when in one limb of it we find ſo much corruption.

It involves ſervility and abjectneſs of mind.

4. A ſecond is Servility and Abjectneſs of humor: and of this there needs no other proof than has bin already given; this charge being implicitly involv'd in the former of Lying, the condeſcending to that being a mark of a diſingenuous ſpirit. And accordingly the nobler Heathen lookt on it as the vice of Slaves and Vaſſals, below the liberty of a free man, as well as an honeſt. But tho' I need no other evidence to make good the accuſation, yet every Sycophant furniſhes me with many ſupernumerary proofs. Look upon ſuch a one, and you ſhall ſee his eies immoveably fixt on his Patrons face, watching each look, each glance, and in every change of his countenance (like a ſtar-gazer) reading his own deſtiny, his ears chain'd (like gally-ſlaves at the oar) to his dictate, ſucking in the moſt inſipid diſcourſes with as much greedineſs, as if they were the Apothegms of the ſeven Sages, his Tongue tuned only to Panegyrics and acclamations, his feet in a winged motion upon every nod or other ſignification of his pleſure: in a word, his whole body (as if it had no other ſpirits than what it derived from him) varies its poſtures, its exerciſes, as he finds agreeable to the humour he is to ſerve. And can humanity contrive to debaſe it ſelf more? Yes it can, and do's too often, by enſlaving its Diviner part too, taking up not only opinions, but even crimes alſo in compliance, playing the incarnate Devil, and helping to act thoſe villanies which Satan can only ſuggeſt: and if this be not a ſtate of abject ſlavery, ſure there is none in the world. *Plutarch* tells us, that *Philoxenus* for deſpiſing ſome dull Poetry of *Dionyſius*, was by him condemned to dig in the quarries: from whence being by the mediation of friends remanded, at his return *Dionyſius* produced ſome other of his verſes, which as ſoon as *Philoxenus* had read, he made no reply, but calling to the waiters, ſaid, *Let them carry me again to the quarries.* And if a heathen Poet could prefer a corporal ſlavery before a mental, what name of reproch is loud enough for them, who can ſubmit to both, in purſuit of thoſe poor ſordid advantages they project by their Flatteries? Nor is this baſeneſs more obſervable in theſe mean fawnings and obſervances, than it is in the proteſtations of Kindneſs and Friendſhip. Love is the greateſt gift any man has to beſtow, and Friendſhip the ſacredeſt of all morall bonds: and to proſtitute theſe to little pitiful deſigns, is ſure one of the baſeſt cheats we can put upon our common nature, in thus debaſing her pureſt and moſt currant coin, which by theſe frequent adulterations is become ſo ſuſpected, that ſcarce any man knows what he receives. But Chriſtian Charity is yet worſe uſed in the caſe: for that obliging to all ſincerity, is hereby induced to give gold for droſs, exhibit that *Love in deed and in truth*, which is returned only *in word and in tongue*, 1 John 3. 18. And ſo it do's in thoſe who obſerve its rules: but in thoſe who own, yet obſerve them not, 'tis yet a greater ſufferer, by laboring under the ſcandal of all their diſſimulations. It was once the Character given Chriſtians, even by their enemies, *Behold how they love one another*, but God knows we may now be pointed out by a very differing mark, *Behold how they deceive and delude one another*. And ſure this violation we herein offer to our religion, do's not allay but aggravate the baſeneſs of this practice: for if in the other we ſell our ſelves, in this we ſell our God too; ſacrifice our intereſt in him to get a ſurreptitious title to the favor of a man.

And this I conceive do's in the ſecond place not much commend the art of Flattery which is built up of ſo vile materials.

And alſo treachery.

5. And to compleat this infamous compoſition, in the third place Treachery comes in; a crime of ſo odious a kind, that to name it is to implead it: yet how intrinſic a part this is of Flattery, will need no great skill to evidence, daily experience ſufficiently doing it. 'Tis a common obſervation of Flatterers, that they are like the Heliotrope, open only towards the Sun, but ſhut and contract themſelves at night, and in cloudy weather. Let the object of their adoration be but eclipſed, they can ſee none of thoſe excellences which before dazled their eies: and how ever inconſtant they may be in it to others, they are indeed very conſtant to themſelves, true to their fixt principle, of courting the greatneſs not the man; in purſuit whereof their old Idol is often made a ſacrifice to their new: all malicious diſcovery is made of their falling friend, to buy an intereſt in the riſing one. Of this there are ſuch crouds of examples in Story, that it would be impertinent to ſingle out any, eſpecially in an age that is fitter to furniſh preſidents for the future, than to borrow of the paſt times. But ſuppoſing the Paraſite not actually guilty of this baſe revolt, (which yet he ſeldom fails to be upon occaſion) yet is he no leſs Treacherous even in the height of his Blandiſhments, and while he moſt courts a man, he do's the moſt ruinouſly undermine him. For firſt he abuſes him in his underſtanding, precludes him from that which wiſe men have judged the moſt eſſential part of Learning, the knowledge of himſelf, from which 'tis the main buſineſs of a Flatterer to divert him. And to this abuſe there is another inevitably conſequent: for this ignorance of his faults or follies, neceſſarily condemns him to the continuing in them, it being impoſſible for him to think of correcting either the one or the other, who is made believe he has neither. This is like the treachery of a bribed officer in a Garriſon, who will not let the weak parts be fortified, and laies the man as open to aſſaults, as the Town. Yet this is not all, he do's not only provide for the continuance, but the improving of his crimes and errors, which alas are too prolific of themſelves, but being cultivated and manured with perpetual ſoothings and encouragements, grow immeſurably luxurious. And accordingly we ſee that men uſed only to applauſes, are ſo ſwell'd with them, that their inſolences are intolerable. And this they are ſometimes taught to their coſt, when they happen among free men, who will not ſubmit to all they ſay, nor commend all they do. And finding theſe uneaſy contradictions when they come abroad, they are willing to retire to their moſt complaiſant company: and ſo this Sycophant Devil having once got them within his circle, may enchant them as he pleaſes, lead them from one wickedneſs to another. And as *Caligula* and other voluptuous Emperours, by being adored as Gods, ſunk in their ſenſuality below the Nature of man, ſo theſe celebrated Perſons are by that falſe veneration animated to all thoſe reprochful practices, which may expoſe them to a real contemt: their follies, as well as their vices ſtill get head, till they anſwer the deſcription the Wiſe man gives of the old Giants, *Who fall away in the ſtrength of their fooliſhneſs*, Ecclus. 16. 7.

Which is enhanc'd by being acted under the diſguiſe of friendſhip.

6. And ſure he that betraies a man to all theſe miſchiefs, may well be thought perfidious. But that which infinitly amplifies and enhances the Treachery is, that all this is acted under the notion and diſguiſe of a friend; a relation ſo venerable, that methinks 'tis the neareſt ſecular tranſcript of the treaſon, which is ſtoried of thoſe who have adminiſtred

Poiſon in the Euchariſt. The name of a friend is ſuch an endearment, as nothing human can equal. All other natural or civil ties take their greateſt force from this. What ſignifies an unfriendly Parent, or Brother, or Wiſe? 'Tis friendſhip only that is the cement which really and effectively combines mankind: and therefore we may obſerve, that God reckoning up other relations, illuſtrates them by ſeveral notes of endearment, but when he comes to that of friendſhip, 'tis *the friend who is as thine own ſoul*, Deut. 13. 6. nothing below the higheſt inſtance was thought expreſſive enough of that union. What a Legion of Fiends then poſſeſſeth men that can break theſe chains, Matt. 5. 4. nay that can hammer and forge thoſe very chains into Daggers and Stillettoes, and make their friendſhip an engine of ruine. This ſure is the blackeſt color wherein we can view a Paraſite, his falſe light makes the ſhadow the more diſmal: as the Ape has a peculiar deformity above other brutes by that aukward and ungraceful reſemblance he has to a man, ſo ſure a Flatterer is infinitely the more hateful for being the ugly counterfeit of a Friend. And as this Treachery lies at the bottom of the Panegyrics, ſo alſo do's it of all the careſſes and exuberant kindneſſes of a Flatterer, which if they aimed not at any particular end of circumvention, muſt yet in the general be Treacherous by being falſe. A man looks on the love of his friend as one of his richeſt poſſeſſions (upon which account the Philoſopher thought friends were to be inventoried as well as goods.) What a defeat and diſcomfiture is it to a man, when he comes to uſe this wealth, to find it all falſe mettle, ſuch as will not anſwer any of thoſe purpoſes for which he depended on it. There cannot ſure be a greater Treachery, than firſt to raiſe a confidence, and then deceive it. But beſides this fundamental falſeneſs, there are alſo many incidental Treacheries, which fall in upon occaſion of particular deſigns. A pretence of kindneſs is the univerſal ſtale to all baſe projects: by this men are rob'd of their fortunes, and women of their honor: in a word all the wolfiſh deſigns walk under this ſheeps clothing, and as the world goes, men have more need to beware of thoſe who call themſelves friends, than thoſe who own themſelves enemies.

Nothing is ſo odious as a barefaced Flatterer.

7. Theſe are the lineaments of this vice of Flattery, which ſure do together make up a face of moſt extreme deformity. I might upon a true account add another, and charge it with folly too. I am ſure according to the Divine eſtimate it is alwaies ſo: and truly it do's not ſeldom prove ſo in the ſecular alſo. Men of this art do ſometimes drop their vizard before they have got the prize, and then there is nothing in the world that appears ſo contemtible, ſo ſilly; a barefaced Flatterer being every bodies ſcorn. The ſhort is, wherever this game is plaied, there is alwaies a fool in the caſe: if the Paraſite is detected, it falls to his ſhare: if he be not, to his whom he deludes. But at the beſt 'tis but ſubtilty and cunning he can boaſt of, and if he can in his own fancy raiſe that to the opinion of true wiſdom, 'tis a ſign he is come round to practice his deceits upon himſelf, and is as much his own Flatterer as he has been others.

'Tis ſtrange ſo diſingenuous a practice ſhould be found with perſons of condition.

8. And now I know not whether it be more ſhame or wonder, to ſee that men can ſo put off ingenuity, and the native greatneſs of their kind, as to deſcend to ſo baſe, ſo ignoble a vice: yet alas we daily ſee it done, and that not only by the ſcum and refuſe of the people, ſuch as *Job* ſpeaks of, *who are viler than the earth*, Chap. 30. 8. but by Perſons of all conditions. Flattery like a ſpring forc'd upwards aſcends, as cares are by the wiſeman ſaid to deſcend, Ecclus. 40. 4. *from him that weareth a crown to him that weareth a linnen frock*: all intermedial degrees are but like pipes, which as they

ſuck from below, ſo tranſmit it ſtill upwards. There are few ſo low but find ſome body to Cajole and Flatter them. Some intereſt or other may ſometimes be to be ſerved even upon the meaneſt, and thoſe that find themſelves thus ſolicited for benefits, are eaſily taught by it how to addreſs to their immediate ſuperiors, from whom they expect greater: and as 'tis thus handed from one rank to another, the art ſtill is more ſubtilized and refined (God help poor Princes the while, who commonly meet with the Elixir, and quinteſſence of this venom:) and thus it paſſes thro' all ſtates and conditions: as they are paſſive on the one ſide, and are Flattered by ſome, ſo they are active on the other, and Flatter others.

An evidence to what a low ebb, not only Chriſtianity, but generoſity is grown.

9. I ſay all conditions, I do not ſay all Perſons in thoſe conditions, for no truly generous ſoul can ſtoop ſo low: but 'tis too evident to what a low ebb Generoſity as well as Chriſtianity is grown, by the numbers of thoſe who thus degrade themſelves, every little petty intereſt being thought worth theſe baſe ſubmiſſions. And truly it is hard to find, by what Topic of perſwaſion to aſſault ſuch men. The meanneſs, or the ſin will ſcarce be diſſwaſives to thoſe who have reconciled themſelves to both: if any thing can be pertinently ſaid to them, it muſt be upon the ſcore of Intereſt, for that being their grand principle, they can with no pretence diſclaime the inferences drawn thence.

'Twere worth conſidering what return can be expreſſed, to the price paid down by the Flatterer.

10. Let them therefore duely ballance the advantages they project from this practice with the miſchiefs and dangers of it. What they expect, is commonly either Honor or Wealth, theſe they hope may be acquired by their proſtrations to thoſe, who can diſpenſe or procure them. 'Tis true, as Honor ſignifies Greatneſs and power, it is ſometimes attain'd by it, but then as it ſignifies Reputation and eſteem, 'tis as ſure to be loſt. He that thus aſcends, may be lookt on with fear, but never with reverence. Now I think 'tis no good bargain to exchange this ſecond notion of Honor for the firſt, for beſides the difference in the intrinſic value, 'tis to be conſider'd how tottering a Pinacle unmerited Greatneſs is. He that rais'd him to ſatisfy his humor at one time, can (with more eaſe and equal juſtice) throw him down at another: and when ſuch a man do's fall, he falls as without pity, ſo without remedy, has no foundation on which to rebuild his fortune: his Sycophanting arts being detected, that Game is not to be plaid the ſecond time, whereas a man of a clear reputation, tho' his barque be ſplit, yet he ſaves his Cargoe, has ſomething left towards ſetting up again, and ſo is in capacity of receiving benefit not only from his own induſtry, but the friendſhip of others. A ſound piece of Timber, if it be not thought fit for one uſe, yet will be laid by for another: and an honeſt man will probably at one time or other be thought good for ſomething.

The deſign of getting wealth is as unfortunate as the hope of favor.

11. As for the other aim, that of Wealth, 'tis very poſſible that may ſometimes be compaſſed; and well it may, the Flatterer, having ſeveral Springs to feed it by. For he that has a great Patron, has the advantage of his countenance and Authority, he has that of his bounty and liberality, and he has another (ſometimes greater than both) that of his negligence and deceivableneſs. But yet all theſe acquiſitions, are many times like Fairy mony, what is brought one night, is taken away the next. Men of this mold ſeldom know how to bear proſperity temperately, and it is no new thing to ſee a Privadoe carry it ſo high, as to awake the jealouſy of his promoter, which being aſſiſted by the buſy induſtry of thoſe who envy his fortune, 'twill be eaſy enough to find ſome flaw in his Gettings, by which to unravel the whole Web: an event that has bin oft

experimented not only in the private managery of Families, but in the moſt Public adminiſtrations. And theſe are ſuch hazards, that laid all together would much recommend to any the Moral of *Horace*'s Fable, and make one chuſe the Country Mouſes plain fare with ſafety, rather than the delicacies of the City with ſo much danger. This then is the ſtate of the proſperous Paraſite: but alas how many are there who never arrive to this, but are kickt down ere they have climb'd the two or three firſt rounds of the Ladder, whoſe deſigns be ſo humble, as not to aſpire above a Major-Domo, or ſome ſuch domeſtic preferment, (for in this trade there are adventurers of all ſizes) but upon all theſe conſiderations, methinks it appears no very inviting one to any. At the long run an honeſt freedom of ſpeech will more recommend a man, than all theſe ſneaking flatteries: we have a very wiſe mans word for it, *he that rebuketh a man, afterwards ſhall find more favor, than he that flattereth with his lips*, Prov. 28. 23.

The ſuppreſſion of flattery will moſt depend on thoſe to whom 'tis addreſt.

12. But after all that hath or can be ſaid, the ſuppreſſion of Flattery will moſt depend upon thoſe Perſons to whom it is addreſt: if it be not repulſed there, nothing elſe will diſcourage it, and if it be, 'tis cruſht in the egg, and can produce no viper. Theſe Vultures prey only on carcaſſes, on ſuch ſtupid minds, as have not life and vigor enough to fray them away. Let but Perſons of quality entertain ſuch cuſtomers with a ſevere brow, with ſome ſmart expreſſion of diſlike, thoſe Leeches will immediatly fall off. In *Sparta* when all Laws againſt theft prov'd ineffectual, at laſt they fixt the penalty on them that were rob'd, and by that did the buſineſs: and in the preſent caſe, if 'twere made as infamous to be flatter'd as 'tis to flatter, I believe it might have the like effect. Indeed there is pretence enough to make it ſo: for firſt as to Wit, the advantage is clear on the Flatterers ſide: he muſt be allowed to have more of that (which in this age is more than a counterpoiſe to honeſty) and as for vertue, the balance (as to the principal motive,) ſeems to hang pretty even, 'tis the vice of Avarice that temts the one to Flatter, and the vice of Pride that makes it acceptable to the other. The truth is, there is the bottom of the matter: 'tis that ſecret confederate within, that expoſes men to thoſe aſſaults from without. We have generally ſuch an appetite to praiſe, that we greedily ſuck it in without ſtaying to examin whether it belong to us or no, or whether it be deſign'd as a kindneſs or an abuſe. Other injuries ruſh upon us with violence, and give us notice of their approch: they may be ſaid to come *like water into our bowels, but this like oil into our bones*, Pſal. 109. penetrates eaſily, undiſcernably, by help of that native propenſion we have to receive it. 'Tis therefore the near concern of all, eſpecially of thoſe whoſe quality moſt expoſes them, to keep a guard upon that treacherous inmate, not to let that ſtep into the ſcale to make a baſe Sycophant outweigh a true friend, and when ever they are attaqued with extravagant Encomiums, let them fortify themſelves with this Dilemma, either they have thoſe excellences they are praiſed for, or they have not: if they have not, 'tis an apparent cheat and gull, and he is of a pitiful forlorn underſtanding that delights to be fool'd: but if they have, they are too good to be expos'd to ſuch worms who will inſtantly wither the faireſt gourd, Jon. 4. 7.

No vertue can ſubſiſt with flattery.

For as it is ſaid of the *Grand Signior*, that no graſs growes where his horſe once treads: ſo we may ſay of the Flatterer, no vertue ever proſpers where he is admitted: if he find any, he hugs it till he ſtifles it; if he find none, he ſo indiſpoſes the ſoil, that no future ſeeds can ever take root. In fine, he is a miſchief beyond the deſcription of any Character. O let not men then act this part to themſelves by being their own Paraſites, and then 'twill be an eaſy thing to eſcape all others!

Sect. IX.

Of Boaſting.

The Tongue as inordinate towards God and the Neighbor, is alſo to a mans ſelf.

1. WE have now ſeen ſome effects of an ungovern'd Tongue, as they relate to God and our Neighbor. There is yet a third ſort which reflect upon a mans ſelf. So unboundedly miſchievous is that petulant member, that heaven and earth are not wide enough for its range, but it will find work at home too; and like the viper, that after it had devoured its companions, prei'd upon its ſelf, ſo it corrodes inward, and becomes often as fatal to its owner, as to all the world beſides.

Of this ſort are all imprudent ſpeeches.

2. Of this there are as many inſtances, as there are imprudent things ſaid, for all ſuch have the worſt reflection upon the ſpeaker: and therefore all that have given rules for civil life, have in order to it, put very ſevere reſtraints upon the Tongue, that it run not before the judgment. 'Twas the advice of *Zeno*, to *dip the Tongue in the mind* before one ſhould permit it to ſpeak. *Theophraſtus* uſed to ſay, *It was ſafer truſting to an unbridled horſe, than to intemperate ſpeech.* And daily experience confirms the Aphoriſm, for thoſe that ſet no guard upon their Tongues are hurried by them into a thouſand indecencies, and very often into reall conſiderable miſchiefs. By this means men have proved their own delators, diſcover'd their own moſt important ſecrets: and whereas their heart ſhould have kept a lock upon their Tongue, they have given their Tongue the key of their heart, and the event has bin oft as unhappy as the proceeding was prepoſterous. There are indeed ſo many waies for men to looſe themſelves in their talk that I ſhould do the like, if I ſhould pretend to trace them. Beſides my ſubject leads me not to diſcourſe Ethically, but Chriſtianly of the faults of the Tongue, and therefore I have all along conſidered the one no farther than it happens to be twiſted with the other.

Boaſting is a mixture of vice and folly.

3. In the preſent caſe I ſhall inſiſt only upon one fault of the Tongue, which partakes of both kinds, and it is at once a vice and a folly, I mean that of Boaſting and vaunting a mans ſelf: a ſtrein to which ſome mens tongues have a wonderful glibneſs. No diſcourſe can be adminiſtred, but they will try to turn the Tide, and draw it all into their own Channel, by entertaining you with long ſtories of themſelves: or if there be no room for that, they will at leaſt ſcrew in here and there ſome intimations of what they did or ſaid. Yea ſo ſtupid a vanity is this, that it works alike upon all materialls: not only their greater and more illuſtrious acts or ſentences, but even their moſt ſlight and trivial occurrences, by being theirs, they think require a conſiderableneſs, and are forcibly impoſed upon the company: the very dreams of ſuch people ſtrait commence prophecy, and are as ſeriouſly related, as if they were undoubted revelations. And ſure if we reflect upon our Saviors rule, that *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh*, we cannot but think theſe men are very full of themſelves, and to be ſo, is but an other phraſe for being very Proud. So 'tis Pride in the heart, which is the ſpring that feeds this perpetual current at the mouth, and under that notion we are to conſider it.

4. And

Men full of themſelves, and pride are thereby made boaſters.

4. And truly there is nothing can render it more infamous, Pride being a vice that of all others is the moſt branded in Scripture as moſt deteſtable to God, and is ſignalized by the puniſhment to be ſo. This turned *Lucifer* out of Heaven, *Nebuchadnezar* out of his Throne, nay out of Humane ſociety. And indeed it ſeems ſtill to have ſomething of the ſame effect, nothing rendring a man ſo unconverſible; for it ſets him above the meaner ſort of company, and makes him intolerable to the better, and to compleat the parallel, he ſeldom comes to know himſelf till he be turn'd a grazing, be reduced to ſome extremities.

Boaſting of natural or acquir'd advantages is ſacrilege.

5. But this boaſting arrogant humor, tho' alwaies bad, yet is more or leſs ſo according to the Subject on which it works. If it be only on Natural excellences, as Beauty, Wit; or accidental acquiſitions, as Honor, Wealth, or the like, yet even here 'tis not only a Theft, but a Sacriledg; the glory of thoſe being due only to the Donor, not to the Receiver, there being not ſo much as any prediſpoſition in the Subject to determine Gods bounty. He could have made the moſt deformed Beggar as handſom and as rich, as thoſe who moſt pride themſelves in their wealth and beauty. No man fancies himſelf to be his own Creator, and tho' ſome have aſſumed to be the Architects of their own fortunes, yet the frequent defeats of mens induſtry and contrivance, do ſufficiently confute that bold pretence, and evince that there is ſomthing above them, which can either blaſt or proſper their attemts. What an invaſion then is it of Gods right, to ingroſs the honor of thoſe things being don, which were not at all in their power to do? And ſure the folly is as great in reſpect of men, as the ſin is towards God. This boaſting like a heavy Nurſe, overlaies the Child, the vanity of that quite drowns the notice of the things in which 'tis founded, and men are not ſo apt to ſay, ſuch a man is Handſom, Wiſe, or Great, as that he is proud upon the fancy of being ſo. In a word he that celebrates his own excellencies, muſt be content with his own applauſes, for he will get none of others, unleſs it be from thoſe fawning Sycophants, whoſe praiſes are worſe than the bittereſt Detraction.

The vice is ſo ſottiſh to be gratified by flattery.

6. And yet ſo ſottiſh a vice is Pride, that it can make even thoſe inſidious Flatteries matter of boaſt, which is a much more irrational object of it than the former. How eagerly do ſome men propagate every little Encomium their Paraſites make of them? With what guſt and ſenſuality will they tell how ſuch a Jeſt of theirs took, or ſuch a Magnificence was admired? 'Tis pleaſant to ſee what little Arts and dexterities they have to wind in ſuch things into diſcourſe: when alas it amounts to no more than this, that ſome have thought them fools enough to be flatter'd, and 'tis odds but the hearers will think them enough ſo to be laught at.

Boaſting of piety is a peculiar extravagance.

7. But there is yet another Subject of Boaſting more fooliſh, and more criminal too than either of the former; and that is when men vaunt of their Piety, which if it were true, were yet leſs owing to themſelves than any natural endowment. For tho' we do not at all aſſiſt towards them, yet do we neither obſtruct, but in the operations of Grace 'tis otherwiſe: we have there a principle of oppoſition, and God never makes us his own till he ſubdue that: and tho' he do it not by an irreſiſtable force, but by ſuch ſweet and gentle inſinuations, that we are ſometimes captivated 'ere we are aware: yet that do's not impeach his right of conqueſt, but only ſhews him the more gracious conqueror. 'Tis true in reſpect of the event we have great cauſe of exultance and joy, Gods ſervice being the moſt perfect freedom: yet in regard of the efficiency,

we have as little matter of Boaſt, as the ſurprized City has in the triumphs of its victor.

It either finds or makes the piety not real.

8. But ſecondly either this vaunted Piety is not reall, and then 'tis good for nothing, or elſe by being vaunted becomes ſo. If it be not reall, 'tis then the ſuperadding Hypocriſy to the former ſacriledg, and attemt at once to rob God and cheat men, and in the event uſually renders them hateful to both, to God (who cannot be mocked) it do's ſo at the inſtant, and ſeldom miſſes to do ſo at laſt to men. An Hypocrite has a long part to act, and if his memory fail him but in any one ſcene, his play is ſpoiled: ſo that his hazards are ſo great, that 'tis as little prudent, as 'tis honeſt to ſet up the trade, eſpecially in an age when Piety it ſelf is at ſo low a price, that its counterfeit cannot paſs much. But if the piety be indeed true, the Boaſting it blaſts it, makes it utterly inſignificant. This we are told by *Chriſt* himſelf, who aſſures us, that even the moſt Chriſtian actions of praier, alms, and faſting, muſt expect no other reward (when boaſted) than the ſought-for applauſe of men, *Matt. 6.* When a man ſhall make his own tongue the trumpet of his Alms, or the Echo of his Prayers, he craves, or rather ſnatches his own reward, and muſt not look God ſhould heap more upon him: the recompence of his pride he may indeed look for from him, but that of his vertue he has foreſtall'd. In ſhort piety is like thoſe Lamps of old, which maintain'd their light ſome Ages under ground, but as ſoon as they took air expir'd. And ſurely there cannot be a more deplorable folly, than thus to loſe a rich Jewel, only for the pitiful pleſures of ſhewing it: its the humor of Children and Idiots, who muſt be handling their birds till they fly away, and it ranks us with them in point of diſcretion, tho' not of innocence.

Boaſting is a ſelf undermining vice.

9. From the view of theſe particulars we may in the groſs conclude that this oſtentation is a moſt fooliſh ſin, ſuch as never brought in advantage to any man. There is no vice ſo undermines it ſelf as this do's: 'tis glory it ſeeks, and inſtead of gaining of that, it loſes common ordinary eſtimation. Every body that ſees a bladder puft up, knows 'tis but wind that ſo ſwells it: and there is no ſurer argument of a light frothy brain, than this bubbling, at the mouth. Indeed there is nothing renders any man ſo contemtible, ſo utterly uſeleſs to the world: it excludes him almoſt from all commerce, makes him uncapable of receiving or doing a benefit. No man will do him a good turn, becauſe he foreſees he will arrogate it to himſelf, as the effect of his merit: and none (that are not in ſome great exigence) will receive one from him, as knowing it ſhall not only be proclaimed, but magnified much above the true worth. There ſeems to be but one purpoſe for which he ſerves, and that is to be ſport for his company: and that he ſeldom fails to be, for in theſe gameſome daies men will not loſe ſuch an opportunity of divertiſement, and therefore will purpoſely give him hints, which may put him upon his Rhodomontades. I do not ſpeak this by way of encouragement to them, but only to ſhew theſe vaporers, to what ſcorn they expoſe themſelves, and what advantage they give to any that have a mind to abuſe them: for they need not be at any pains for it, they do but ſwim with their ſtream; an approving nod or ſmile, ſerves to drive on the deſign, and make them diſplay themſelves more diſadvantageouſly, more ridiculouſly, than the moſt Satyrical Character could poſſibly do.

The Boaſter is a certain prey to flatterers.

10. But beſides theſe ſportive projects, ſuch a man laies himſelf open to more dangerous circumventions. He that ſhews himſelf ſo enamour'd of praiſe, that (*Narciſſus* like) dotes on his own reflections, is a fit prey

for Flatterers, and ſuch a Carcaſe will never want thoſe Eagles: when his weak part is once diſcern'd, (as it muſt ſoon be when himſelf publiſhes it) he ſhall quickly be ſurrounded with aſſailants. The laſt Section has ſhewed the miſery of a man ſo beſeiged, therefore I ſhall not enlarge on it here, this mention being only intended to evince how apt this vain-glorious humor is to betray men to it.

It precludes to himſelf all means of growing wiſer.

11. Theſe are competent Specimens of the folly of this vice: but it has yet a farther aggravation, that it precludes all means of growing wiſer: 'tis *Solomon*'s aſſertion, *Seeſt thou a man wiſe in his own conceit? there is more hope of a Fool than of him,* Prov. 26. 12. And the reaſon is evident, for he diſcards the two grand inſtruments of inſtruction, Admonition and Obſervation. The former he thinks ſuperſeded by his own Perfections, and therefore when any ſuch friendly office is attemted towards him, he imputes it either to Envy and a deſire to eclipſe his luſtre by finding ſome ſpots, or elſe to Ignorance and incapacity of eſtimating his worth: the one he entertains with Indignation, the other with diſdainful Pity. As for Obſervation, he ſo circumſcribes it within himſelf, that he can never fetch in any thing from without. Reading of men has bin by ſome thought the moſt facile and expedite Method for acquiring Knowledg: and ſure for ſome kinds of Knowledg it is, but then a man muſt not only read one Author, much leſs the worſt one he can pick out for himſelf. 'Tis an old and true ſaying; He that is his own Pupil, ſhall have a Fool for his Tutor: and truly he that ſtudies only himſelf, will be like to make but a ſorry Progreſs. Yet this is the caſe of arrogant men, they loſe all the benefit of Converſation, and when they ſhould be enriching their Minds with forreign treſure, they are only counting over their own ſtore. Inſtead of adverting to thoſe ſober diſcourſes which they hear from others, they are perhaps watching to interrupt them by ſome pompous Story of themſelves, or at leaſt in the abundance of their ſelf-ſufficiency, think they can ſay much better things, Magiſterially obtrude their own notions, and fall a teaching when 'tis fitter they ſhould learn: and ſure to be thus forward to lay out, and take no care to bring in, muſt needs end in a Bankrupt ſtate. 'Tis true I confeſs the ſtudy of a mans-ſelf is (rightly taken) the moſt uſeful part of learning, but then it muſt be ſuch a Study as brings him to know himſelf, which none do ſo little as theſe men, who in this are like thoſe ſilly women the Apoſtle deſcribes 2 Tim. 3. 7. *Who are ever learning, yet never attain.* And 'tis no wonder, for they begin at the wrong end, make no inquiry into their faults or defects, but fix their Contemplation only in their more ſplendid qualities, with which they are ſo dazled, that when you bring them to the darker parts of themſelves, it fares with them as with thoſe that come newly from gazing on the Sun, they can ſee nothing.

The cure of the diſeaſe is either by revulſion;

12. And now having diſſected this ſwelling vice, and ſeen what it is that feeds the tumor, the cure ſuggeſts it ſelf. If the diſeaſe be founded in Pride, the abating that is the moſt natural and proper remedy: and truly one would think that men weighing the foregoing conſiderations, might prove ſufficient allaies to it. Yet becauſe where humors are turgent, 'tis neceſſary not only to purge them, but alſo to ſtrengthen the infected part, I ſhall adventure to give ſome few advices by way of Fortification and Antidote.

Or by fortifying the affected part, by enlarging our thoughts.

13. In the firſt place, that of the Apoſtle offers it ſelf to my hand, *Look not every man on his own things, but every man alſo on the things of others.* Phil. 2. 4. A counſel which in a diſtorted ſenſe ſeems to be too much practiced.

ɛticed. We are apt to apply it to worldly advantages, and in that notion not to look on our own things with thankfulneſs, but on other mens with envy. We apply it alſo to errors and ſins, and look not on our own to correct and reform, but on others to deſpiſe and cenſure. Let us at laſt take it in the genuine ſenſe, and not look on our own excellencies, but thoſe of others. We ſee in all things how deſuetude do's contract and narrow our faculties, ſo that we can apprehend only thoſe things wherein we are converſant. The droiling Peaſant ſcarce thinks there is any world beyond his own Village, or the neighboring Markets, nor any gaiety beyond that of a Wake or Morrice; and Men who are accuſtom'd only to the admiration of themſelves, think there is nothing beſide them worthy of regard. Theſe unbred minds muſt be a little ſent abroad, made acquainted with thoſe excellencies which God has beſtowed on other men, and then they will not think themſelves like *Gideon's* fleece to have ſuckt up all the dew of heaven: nay perhaps, they may find they rather anſwer the other part of the miracle; and are drier than their neighbors. Let them therefore put themſelves in this courſe, obſerve diligently all the good that is viſible in other men: and when they find themſelves mounting into their altitudes, let them clog their wings with the remembrance of thoſe who have out-ſoar'd them, not in vain opinion, but in true worth. 'Tis nothing but the fancy of ſingularity that puffs us up. To breathe, to walk, to hear, to ſee, are excellent powers, yet no body is proud of them, becauſe they are common to the whole kind: and therefore if we would obſerve the great number of thoſe that equal, or exceed us, even in the more appropriate endowments, we ſhould not put ſo exceſſive a price upon our ſelves.

By making a fair and equal reflection upon our ſelves.

14. Secondly if we will needs be reflecting upon our ſelves, let us do it more ingenuouſly, more equally; let us take a true ſurvey, and obſerve as well the barren as the fertile part of the ſoil: and if this were don, many mens value would be much ſhort of what they are willing to ſuppoſe it. Did we but compare our Crop of Weeds and Nettles, with that of our Corn, we muſt either think our ground is poor, or our ſelves very ill husbands. When therefore the recollection of either reall or fancied worth begins to make us aery, let us condenſe again by the remembrance of our ſins and folly, 'tis the only poſſible ſervice they can do us, and conſidering how dear they are to coſt us, we had not need loſe this one accidental advantage. In this ſenſe *Satan may caſt out Satan*, our vileſt guilts help to eject our pride, and did we well manage this one ſtratagem againſt him, 'twould give us more cauſe of triumph, than moſt of thoſe things for which we ſo ſpread our plumes: I do not ſay we ſhould contract new guilts to make us humble, God knows we need not, we have all of us enough of the old ſtock, if we would but thus employ them.

And by avoiding all ſelf-ſpeaking.

15. In the laſt place I ſhould adviſe thoſe who are apt to talk big things of themſelves, to turn into ſome other road of diſcourſe: for if they are their own Theme, their Tongues will as naturally turn into Eulogies, as a horſe do's into that Inn to which he is cuſtom'd. All habits do require ſome little exceſs of the contrary to their cure: for we have not ſo juſt a ſcantling of our ſelves, as to know to a grain what will level the ſcales, and place us in the right Mediocrity. Let men therefore that have this infirmity, ſhun (as far as prudence and intereſt permits) all diſcourſe of themſelves, till they can ſever it from that unhappy appendage. They will not be at all the leſs acceptable company, it being generally thought none of the beſt parts of breeding, to talk much of ones ſelf: for tho' it be

don ſo as not to argue pride, yet it do's ignorance of more worthy ſubjects.

The laſt ſtep of boaſting is to brag of baſeneſs and villany.

16. I ſhould here conclude this Section, but that there is another ſort of vaunting Talk, which was not well reducible to any of the former Heads, the ſubject matter being vaſtly diſtant: for in thoſe the Boaſting was founded in ſome either real or ſuppoſed worth, but this in Baſeneſs and villany. There are a Generation of men, who have removed all the Landmarks which their Fathers (nay even the Father of Spirits) have ſet, revers'd the common notions of Humanity, and call evil good, and good evil, and thoſe things which a moderate impudence would bluſh to be ſurpris'd in, they not only proclaim but boaſt of, blow the Trumpet as much before their crimes, as other good deeds. Nay ſo much do they affect this inverted ſort of Hypocriſy, that they own more wickedneſs than they act, aſſume to have made Practical the higheſt Speculations of villany, and like the Devils Knights errants, pretend to thoſe Romantic atchievements, which the verieſt Fiend Incarnate could never compaſs. Theſe are ſuch Prodigies, ſuch Monſters of villany, that tho' they are the objects of Grief and Wonder, they are not of Counſel. Men who thus rave, we may conclude their brains are turned, and one may as well read Lectures at Bedlam as treat with ſuch. Yet we know that there ſharp corrections recover crazed men to Sobriety; and then their Cure lies only in the hand of Civil Juſtice: if that would take them at their words, receive their Brags as Confeſſions, and puniſh them accordingly, it may be a little real ſmart would correct this mad Itch, and teach them not *to glory in their ſhame*, Phil. 3. 19.

The conſideration of this reprobate ſtate, ſhould affright from all ſteps towards it.

In the mean time let others who are not yet arrived to this height, conſider betimes, that all indulgent practice of ſin is the direct Road to it, and according to the degrees of that indulgence, they make more or leſs haſte. He that conſtantly and habitually indulges, rides upon the Spur, and will quickly overtake his Leaders, nay if it be but this one vice of vanity, it may finally bring him to their State. He that loves to brag, will ſcarce find exerciſe enough for that faculty in his vertues, and therefore may at laſt be temted to take in his vices alſo. But that which is more ſeriouſly conſiderable is, that Pride is ſo provoking to Almighty God, that it often cauſes him to withdraw his *Grace*, which is a Donative he has promiſed only *to the humble*, James 4. 6. And indeed when we turn that Grace into wantonneſs, as the Proud man do's who is pamper'd by it into high conceits of himſelf, 'tis not probable God will any longer proſtitute his favors to ſuch abuſe. The Apoſtle obſerves it of the Gentiles, who had in contradiction of their natural light abandon'd themſelves to vile Idolatries, that God *after gave them up to a reprobate mind and vile affections.* Rom. 1. 25, 26. But the Proud now ſtifle a much clearer light, and give up themſelves to as baſe an Idolatry, the adoration of themſelves: and therefore 'tis but equal to expect God ſhould deſert them, and (as ſome Nations have deified their diſeaſes) permit them to celebrate even their fouleſt enormities. The application of all I ſhall ſum up in the words of the Apoſtle, Rom. 11. 21. *Take heed alſo leſt he ſpare not thee.*

SECT. X.

Of Querulouſneſs.

The boaſter is moſt apt to be querulous.

1. TO this of Boaſting may not unfitly be ſubjoin'd another inordinacy of the Tongue, viz. murmuring and complaining. For tho' theſe faults ſeem to differ as much in their complexions, as Sanguine do's from Melancholly, yet there is nothing more frequent than to ſee them united in the ſame Perſon. Nor is this conjunction of a late date, but is as old as St. *Jude*'s daies, who obſerves that the *murmurers* and *complainers* are the very ſame with thoſe who ſpeak *great ſwelling words*, Jude 16.

Pride obliges to both.

2. Nor are we to wonder to find them thus conjoin'd, if we conſider what an original cognation and kindred they have, they being (however they ſeem divided) ſtreams iſſuing from the ſame fountain. For the very ſame pride which promts a man to vaunt and overvalue what he is, do's as forcibly incline him to contemn and diſvalue what he has; whilſt meſuring his enjoiments by that vaſt Idea he has form'd of himſelf, 'tis impoſſible but he muſt think them below him.

This ingrateful humor is the complexion of mankind.

3. This indeed is the true original of thoſe perpetual complainings we hear from all ſorts and conditions of men. For let us paſs thro' all Degrees, all Ages, we ſhall rarely find a ſingle Perſon, much leſs any number of men exemt from this Querulous, this ſullen humor: as if that breath of life wherewith God originally inſpired us, had bin given us not to magnify his Bounty, but to accuſe his Illiberality, and like the diſmaller ſorts of inſtruments, could be tuned to no other Strains but thoſe of Mourning and Lamentation. Every man contributes his note to this doleful Harmony, and after all that God has done to oblige and delight mankind, ſcarce any man is ſatisfied enough, I will not ſay to be thankful, but to be patient. For alas what Tragical complaints do men make of their infelicity, when perhaps their proſperity is as much the envious outcry of others? Every little defeat of a deſign, of an appetite, every little diſregard from thoſe above them, or leſs ſolemn obſervance from thoſe below them, makes their *Heart hot within them*, Pſal. 39. 3. and the tongue (that combuſtible part) quickly takes fire and *breaks out* into extravagant exclamations. It is indeed ſtrange to ſee how weighty every the trivialleſt thing is when a paſſion is caſt into the ſcale with it, how every the ſlighteſt inconvenience or petty want preponderates hundreds of great ſubſtantial bleſſings: when indeed were it in an inſtance never ſo conſiderable, it could be no juſt Counterpoiſe. Yet ſo cloſely is this corruption interwoven with our conſtitution, that it has ſomtimes prevail'd even upon good men. *Jacob* tho' he had twelve ſons, yet upon the ſuppoſed death of one, deſpis'd the comforts of all the reſt, and with an obſtinate ſorrow reſolves to *go mourning to his grave*, Gen. 35. 37. *David* after that ſignal victory which had preſerv'd his life, reinſtated him in his Throne, and reſtor'd him to the Ark and Sanctuary, yet ſuffer'd the loſs of his rebellious ſon, who was the Author of his danger, to overwhelm the ſenſe of his deliverance, and inſtead of Hymns and Praiſes, breaks out into ejaculations and effeminate wailings, 2 *Sam.* 18. 33.

Grounded generally upon the ſlighteſt, and worſt motives.

4. But God knows the moſt of our complaints cannot pretend to ſuch conſiderable motives: they are not the bowels of a Father, the impreſſes of Nature that excite our repinings, but the impulſes of our luſt and inordinate appetites. Our diſcontents are uſully ſuch as *Ahab*'s for his neighbors vineyard, *Haman*'s for *Mordecai*'s obeiſance, *Achitophel*'s for having his counſel rejected. Every diſappointment of our avarice, ambition and pride, fills our hearts with bitterneſs and our mouths with clamor. For if we ſhould examine the numerous complaints which ſound in every corner, it would doubtleſs be found that the greateſt part of them have ſome ſuch original: and that, whether the pretended grievances be public or private. For the firſt: many a man is a ſtate malecontent, meerly becauſe he ſees another advanced to that honor or wealth which he thinks he has better deſerv'd. He is alwaies inveighing againſt ſuch unequal diſtributions, where the beſt ſervices (ſuch you may be ſure his own are) are the worſt rewarded: nor do's he ever ceaſe to predict public ruines, till his private are repaired. But as ſoon as that is don, his Augury grows more mild: and as if the ſtate and he were like *Hippocrates*'s twins, his recruits give new vigor to that, and till his next ſuit is denied, every thing is well adminiſtred. So full alas men are of themſelves, that 'tis hard to find any the moſt ſplendid pretences which have not ſomthing of that at the bottom: and would every man ranſack his own heart, and reſolve not to caſt a ſtone till he had firſt clear'd it of all ſiniſter reſpects, perhaps the number of our complainers would be much abated.

Level'd ſometimes againſt our neighbor.

5. Nor is it otherwiſe in private diſcontents. Men are apt to think themſelves ill uſed by any man who will not ſerve their intereſt or their humor, nay ſometimes their vices; and are prone in all companies to arraign ſuch an unpliant Perſon, as if he were an enemy to mankind, becauſe he is not a ſlave to their will. Nay many have quarrell'd even with their deareſt friends, becauſe they would not aſſiſt them to their own ruine, or have ſtriven to divert them from it: ſo forcible are our pretentions to mutiny, that we equally take occaſions from benefits or injuries.

And often againſt God.

6. But the higheſt and moſt unhappy inſtance of all is in our behavior towards God, whoſe allotments we diſpute with the ſame, or rather greater boldneſs than we do thoſe of men. What elſe mean thoſe impatient murmurs at thoſe things which are the immediate iſſues of his Providence? Such are our native blemiſhes, diſeaſes, death of friends, and the like. Nay what indeed are our diſpleaſures even at thoſe things which we pretend to faſten upon Second Cauſes? For thoſe being all under the ſubordination of the firſt, cannot move but by its permiſſion. This holy *Job* well diſcern'd, and therefore do's not indite the *Chaldeans* or *Sabeans* for his plunder, but knowing they were but inſtruments, he ſubmiſly acknowledges, that there was a higher agent in his loſs, *The Lord hath taken away*, Job 1.21. When therefore we ravingly execrate the rapine of one man, the deceit of another for our impoveriſhment, when we angrily charge our defamation on the malice of our maligners, our diſappointments on the treachery or negligence of our friends, we do interpretatively conclude either that there is no over-ruling providence which could have reſtrained thoſe events, or elſe (which is equally horrid) we accuſe it as not having don well in permitting them. So that againſt whoſoever we direct our clamors, their laſt rebound is againſt Heaven; this Querulous humor carrying alwaies an implicite re-

pugnance to Gods diſpoſals: but where it is indulged to, it uſually is its own expoſitor, and explicitely avows it, charges God fooliſhly, and by impious murmurs blaſphemes that power which it cannot reſiſt. Indeed the progreſs is very natural for our impatiences at men to ſwell into mutinies againſt God: for when the mind is once imbitter'd, it diſtinguiſhes not of objects, but indifferently lets fly its venom. *He that frets himſelf*, the Prophet tells us, *will curſe his King*, nay *his God*, Iſa. 8. 21. and he that quarrels at Gods diſtributions, is in the direct road to defy his Being.

The firſt naturally leads to the latter, and imbitters all our enjoyments.

7. By this we may eſtimate the danger of our diſcontents, which tho' at firſt they are introduced by the inordinate love of our ſelves, yet are very apt to terminate in hatred and Blaſphemies againſt God. He therefore that would ſecure himſelf from the higheſt degree, muſt watch againſt the loweſt; as he that would prevent a total Inundation, muſt avert the ſmalleſt breach in his Banks. Not but that even the firſt beginnings are in themſelves well worth our guarding: for abſtracting from all the danger of this enormous increaſe, theſe murmurings (like a mortiferous Herb) are poiſonous even in their firſt Spring, before they arrive to their full maturity. To be always moralizing the Fable of *Prometheus* upon one's ſelf, playing the Vulture upon one's own entrails, is no deſirable thing, tho' we were accountable to none but our ſelves for it: to dip our tongues in gall, to have nothing in our mouths but the extract, the exhalation of our inward bitterneſs, is ſure no great Senſuality. So that did we conſult only our own eaſe, we might from that ſingle Topic draw arguments enough againſt our mutinies.

Is degenerous and unmanly.

8. But beſides our duty and uſe, our reputations make their plea alſo. Fortitude is one of the nobleſt of moral vertues, and has the luck to appear conſiderable even to thoſe who deſpiſe all the reſt. Now one of the moſt proper and eminent acts of that is, the bearing adverſe events with evenneſs and temper. This paſſive valor is as much the mark of a great mind as the active, nay perhaps more, the latter being often owing to the Animal, this to the Rational part of man. And ſure we muſt ſtrangely have corrupted the principles of *Morality* as well as *Religion*, if every turbulent unruly Spirit, that fills the world with blood and rapine, ſhall have his ferity call'd gallantry; yet that ſober courage, that maintains it ſelf againſt all the ſhocks of Fortune, that keeps its Poſt in ſpight of the rudeſt encounters; ſhall not be allowed at leaſt as good a name. And then on the contrary we may conclude, that to ſink under every croſs accident, to be ſtill whining and complaining, crying out upon every touch, is a note of a mean degenerous ſoul, below the dignity of our reaſonable nature. For certainly God never gave us reaſon for ſo unkind a purpoſe, as only to quicken and inhance the reſentment of our ſufferings, but rather to controle thoſe diſorders, which the more tumultuous part of us, our ſenſes, are apt to raiſe in us: and we are ſo far men and no farther, as we uſe it to that end. Therefore if the dictates of Religion cannot reſtrain our murmurs, if we are not Chriſtians enough to ſubmit to the divine precepts of meekneſs and acquieſcence: yet let us at leaſt keep within thoſe bounds which ingenuous nature has ſet us, and not by our unmanly impatiences enter common with Brutes and Animals.

Is moſt uneaſy to others and troubleſom in converſation.

9. Nay I may farther add, if neither for Gods nor our own ſakes, yet for others, for human ſociety's ſake, this querulous inclination ſhould be ſuppreſt; there being nothing that renders a man more unpleaſant,

more uneaſy company. For (beſides that 'tis very apt to vent it ſelf upon thoſe with whom he converſes, rendring him capricious and exceptious; and 'tis a harſh, a grating ſound to hear a man alwaies in the complaining Key) no man would willingly dwell within the noiſe of ſhreeks and groans; and the exclamations of the diſcontented differ from thoſe only by being more articulate. It is a very unwelcome importunity, to entertain a mans company with remonſtrances of his own infelicities and miſadventures, and he that will relate all his grievances to others, will quickly make himſelf one to them. For tho' he that is full of the inward ſenſe of them, thinks it rather an eaſe than oppreſſion to ſpeak them out, yet the caſe is far otherwiſe with his Auditors: they are perhaps as much taken up with themſelves, as he is, and as little at leiſure to conſider his concerns, as he theirs. Alas we are not now in thoſe primitive daies, when there was as it were one common ſenſe among Chriſtians, when *if one member ſuffer'd, all the members ſuffer'd with it*, 1 Cor. 12. That Charity which gave that ſympathetic motion to the whole, is now it ſelf benumm'd, flows rarely beyond the narrow compaſs of our perſonal intereſt; and therefore we cannot expect that men ſhould be very patient of our complaints who are not concern'd in the cauſes of them. The Prieſts anſwer to *Judas* do's ſpeak the ſenſe of moſt men in the caſe, *What is that to us? See thou to that*, Matt. 27. 4. I do not deny but that the diſcharging ones griefs into the boſome of a true friend, is both innocent and prudent: and indeed he that has ſuch a treaſure, is unkind to himſelf if he uſe it not. But that which I would diſſwade, is the promiſcuous uſe of this liberty in common Converſation, the ſatisfying our Spleen, when we cannot eaſe our hearts by it, the loud declaimings at our miſery, which is ſeldom ſever'd from as ſevere reflections on thoſe whom we ſuppoſe the cauſes of it; by which nothing can be acquired but the opinion of our Impatience, or perhaps ſome new grievance from ſome, who think themſelves concern'd to vindicate thoſe whom we aſperſe. In a word 'tis as indecent as it is unacceptable, and we may obſerve all men are willing to ſlink out of ſuch company, the Sober for the hazards, the Jovial for the unpleaſantneſs. So that the murmurer ſeems to be turn'd off to the company of thoſe doleful Creatures which the Prophet mentions, which were *to inhabit the ruins of Babylon*, Iſa. 13. 21. For he is ill converſation to all men, tho' the worſt of all to himſelf.

The murmurer ſeems to fit himſelf for the region of weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

10. And now upon the force of all theſe conſiderations, I may reaſonably impreſs the Wiſe mans Counſel, *Therefore beware of murmuring*, Wiſd. 1. 11. And indeed it is not the precept of the Wiſe man alone, but of all who have made any juſt pretence to that title. For when we conſider thoſe excellent lectures of contentation and acquieſcence, wherewith the writings of Philoſophers abound, 'tis hard to ſay whether they ſpeak more of inſtruction or reproch to us. When their confuſed notions of a Deity had given them ſuch impreſſions of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, that they would not pretend to make any elections for themſelves, how do's it ſhame our more explicite knowledg, who dare not depend on him in the ſmalleſt inſtance? who will not take his diſpoſals for good, unleſs our ſenſes become his ſecurities? which amounts but to that degree of credit, which the moſt faithleſs man may expect from us, the truſting him as far as we ſee him. This is ſuch a contumely to him, as the Ethnic world durſt not offer him, and is the peculiar inſolence of us degenerated Chriſtians, who ſure cannot be thought in earneſt when we talk of ſinging *Hallelujahs* in the next world to him, whilſt we entertain him here only with the ſullen

noiſe of murmurs and repinings. For we are not to think that Heaven will Metamorphoſe us on a ſudden, and turn our exclamations and wild clamors into Lauds and Magnificats. It do's indeed perfect and Crown thoſe graces which were here inchoate and begun, but no mans converſion ever ſucceeded his being there: for Chriſt has expreſly told us, *That except we be converted, we ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*; if we go hence in our froward diſcontents, they will aſſociate us with thoſe, with whom is *Weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.*

SECT. XI.

Of Poſitiveneſs.

Poſitiveneſs uſurps a tyranny upon the mind of others; which in the greateſt ſlavery is free.

1. ANother very unhandſom circumſtance in diſcourſe is the being over confident and peremptory, a thing which do's very much unfit men for converſation, it being lookt on as the common birth-right of mankind, that every man is to opine according to the dictates of his own underſtanding, not anothers. Now this Peremtorineſs is of two ſorts, the one a Magiſterialneſs in matters of opinion and ſpeculation, the other a Poſitiveneſs in relating matters of fact: in the one we impoſe upon mens underſtandings, in the other on their faith.

The firſt branch of it is a Magiſterial impoſing of ſpeculative opinions.

2. For the firſt, he muſt be much a ſtranger in the world who has not met with it: there being a generation of men, who as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Are wiſe in their own eies, and prudent in their own ſight*, Iſa. 5. 21. Nay not only ſo, but who make themſelves the ſtandards of wiſdom, to which all are bound to conform, and whoever weighs not in their balance, be his reaſons never ſo weighty, they write *Tekel* upon them. This is one of the moſt oppreſſive Monopolies imaginable: all other can concern only ſomthing without us, but this faſtens upon our nature, yea and the better part of it too, our reaſon; and if it meet with thoſe who have any conſiderable ſhare of that within them, they will often be temted to rally it, and not too tamely reſign this native liberty. Reaſon ſubmits only to reaſon, and he that aſſaults it with bare Authority (that which is Divine always excepted) may aswell cut flame with his ſword, or harden wax in the ſun.

The being uncontroul'd in company is no evidence of having convinced it.

3. 'Tis true indeed theſe great Dictators do ſomtimes run down the company, and carry their Hypotheſis without conteſt: but of this there may be divers reaſons beſides the weight of their arguments. Some unſpeculative men may not have the skill to examine their aſſertions, and therefore an aſſent is their ſafeſt courſe; others may be lazy and not think it worth their pains; a third ſort may be modeſt and awed by a ſevere brow and an imperious nod: and perhaps the wiſer may providently foreſee the impoſſibility of convincing one who thinks himſelf unerrable. Upon theſe or other like grounds 'tis very poſſible all may be ſilenced when never a one is convinced: ſo that theſe great Maſters may often make very falſe eſtimates of their conqueſts, and *ſacrifice to their own nets*, Hab. 1. 16. when they have taken nothing.

4. Nay indeed this inſolent way of propoſing is ſo far from propagating their notions, that it gives prejudice againſt them. They are the gentle inſinuations which pierce (as oil is the moſt penetrating of all liquors;) but in theſe Magiſterial documents men think themſelves attaqu'd

and ſtand upon their guard, and reckon they muſt part with Honor together with their Opinion, if they ſuffer themſelves to be Hector'd out of it. Beſides this impoſing humor is ſo unamitable, that it gives an averſion to the Perſon; and we know how forcible perſonal prejudices are (tho' 'tis true they ſhould not be) towards the biaſſing of Opinions. Nay indeed men of this temper cut themſelves off from the opportunities of Proſelyting others, by averting them from their company. Freedom is the endearing thing in Society, and where that is control'd, men are not very fond of aſſociating themſelves. 'Tis natural to us to be uneaſy in the preſence of thoſe who aſſume an Authority over us. Children care not for the company of their Parents or Tutors, and men will care leſs for theirs, who would make them Children by uſurping a Tutelage.

Nothing is more ridiculous than a concluding face put to an unconcluding argument.

5. All theſe inconveniences are evidently conſequent to this Dogmatizing, ſuppoſing men be never ſo much in the right: but if they happen to be in the wrong, what a ridiculous pageantry is it, to ſee ſuch a Philoſophical gravity ſet to man-out a Soleciſm? A concluding Face put upon no concluding argument, is the moſt contemtible ſort of folly in the world. They do by this ſound a Trumpet to their own defeat: and whereas a modeſt miſtake might ſlip by undiſcern'd, theſe Rhodomontade errors force themſelves upon mens obſervation, and make it as poſſible for men not to ſee, as it is not to deſpiſe them when they do. For indeed Pride is as ill linkt with Error, as we uſually ſay it is with Beggary, and in this as well as that converts pity into contemt.

Since all men are fallible, they ought to be wary and modeſt.

6. And then it would be conſider'd, what ſecurity any man that will be impoſing has, that this will not be his caſe. Human nature is very fallible, and as it is poſſible a man may err in a great many things, ſo 'tis certain every man do's in ſomthing or other. Now who knows at the inſtant he is ſo poſitive, but this may be his erring turn. Alas how frequently are we miſtaken even in common ordinary things? for as the wiſe man ſpeaks, *hardly do we judge aright even in things that are before us*, Wiſd. 9. 16. our very ſenſes do ſometimes delude us. How then may we wander in things of abſtruſe ſpeculation? The conſideration of this hath with ſome ſo prevail'd, that it has produc'd a Sect of ſcepticiſm: and tho' I preſs it not for that purpoſe, yet ſure it may reaſonably be urged to introduce ſome modeſty and calmneſs in our aſſertions. For when we have no other certainty of our being in the right, but our own perſwaſions that we are ſo, this may often be but making one error the gage for another. For God knows confidence is ſo far from a certain mark of truth, that 'tis often the ſeducer into falſhood, none being ſo apt to loſe their way as thoſe who, out of an ungrounded preſumtion of knowing it, deſpiſe all direction from others.

Peremtorineſs befits no form of underſtanding.

7. Let all this be weighed, and the reſult will be, that this peremtorineſs is a thing that can befit no form of underſtanding. It renders wiſe men diſobliging and troubleſome, and fools ridiculous and contemtible. It caſts a prejudice upon the moſt ſolid reaſoning, and it renders the lighter more notoriouſly deſpicable. 'Tis pity good parts ſhould be leaven'd by it, made a ſnare to the owners, and uſeleſs to others. And 'tis pity too that weak parts ſhould by it be condemn'd to be alwaies ſo, by deſpiſing thoſe Aids which ſhould improve them. Since therefore 'tis ſo ill calculated for every Meridian, would God all Climes might be purged from it.

Somtimes it riſes from pride.

8. And as there are weighty objections againſt it in reſpect of its effects, ſo there are no inconſiderable prejudices in relation to its cauſes, of which we may reckon Pride to be the moſt certain and univerſal: for

whatever elſe caſually occurs to it, this is the fundamental conſtitutive principle; nothing but a great overweening of a mans own underſtanding being able to inſtate him in that Imaginary empire over other mens. For here ſure we may ask the Apoſtles queſtion, *Who made thee to differ from another?* When God has made Rationality the common portion of mankind, how came it to be thy incloſure? or what ſignature has he ſet upon thine, what mark of excellency, that thine ſhould be paramount? Doubtleſs if thou fancieſt thou haſt that part of *Jacob's* bleſſing, *To be Lord of thy brethren, and that all thy mothers ſons ſhould bow down to thee,* Gen. 27. 29. thou haſt got it more ſurreptitiouſly than he did, and with leſs effect: for tho' *Iſaac* could not retract his miſtaken benediction, God will never atteſt that fantaſtic, thou haſt pronounced to thy ſelf, with his real effective one.

Sometimes from ignorance.

9. But there happens many times to be another ingredient beſides Pride, and that is Ignorance: for thoſe qualities however they may ſeem at war, do often very cloſely combine. He who has narrow notions, that knows but a few things, and has no glimpſe of any beyond him, thinks there are no ſuch: and therefore as if he had (like *Alexander*) no want but that of worlds to conquer, he thinks himſelf the abſolute monarch of all knowledg. And this is of all others the moſt unhappy compoſition: for ignorance being of it ſelf like ſtiff clay, an infertile ſoil, when pride comes to ſcorch and harden it, it grows perfectly impenetrable: and accordingly we ſee none are ſo inconvincible as your half-witted people; who know juſt enough to excite their pride; but not ſo much as to cure their ignorance.

A ſecond kind of poſitiveneſs is in relating matters of fact.

10. There remains yet a ſecond kind of Peremptorineſs which I am to ſpeak to, and that is of thoſe who can make no relation without an atteſtation of its certainty: a ſort of hoſpitable people, who entertain all the idle vagrant reports, and ſend them out with paſſ-ports and teſtimonials; who when they have once adopted a ſtory, will have it paſs for legitimate how ſpurious ſoever it originally was. Theſe ſomwhat reſemble thoſe Hoſpitals in *Italy*, where all baſtards are ſure of reception, and ſuch a proviſion as may enable them to ſubſiſt in the world: and were it not for ſuch men, many a Fatherleſs lie would be ſtifled in its birth. It is indeed ſtrange to ſee, how ſuddenly looſe rumors knit into formal ſtories, and from thence grow to certainties; but 'tis ſtrange to ſee that men can be of ſuch profligated impudence, as knowingly to give them that advance. And yet 'tis no rarity to meet with ſuch men who will pawn their honors, their ſouls, for that unworthy purpoſe: nay and that too, with as much impertinence as baſeneſs, when no intereſt of their own, or perhaps any man elſe is to be ſerved by it.

Its firſt element ſeems to be idleneſs, and the vanity of ſaying ſomewhat extraordinary in company.

11. This is ſo prodigious a thing, as ſeems to excite ones Curioſity to inquire the Cauſe of ſo wonderful an Effect. And here as in other unnatural productions, there are ſeveral concurrents. If we trace it from its original, its firſt Element ſeems to be idleneſs: this diverting a man from ſerious uſeful entertainments, forces him upon (the uſual refuge of vacant Perſons) the inquiring after News, which when he has got, the venting of it is his next buſineſs. If he be of a credulous Nature, and believe it himſelf, he do's the more innocently impoſe it on others: yet then to ſecure himſelf from the imputation of Levity and too eaſy Faith, he is often temted to lend ſome probable circumſtance. Nay if he be of a proud humor, and have that miſerable vanity of loving to ſpeak big, and to be thought a man of greater correſpondence and intelligence than his Neighbors, he will not bate an Ace of abſolute certainty, but however

doubtful or improbable the thing is, coming from him it muſt go for an indiſputable truth. This ſeems to be the deſcent of this unhappy folly, which yet is often nurſt up by a mean or imprudent Education. A man that hath converſt only with that lower ſort of company, who durſt not diſpute his veracity, thinks the ſame falſe Coin will paſs over the world, which went current amongſt his Father's Servants or Tenants: and therefore we may obſerve that this is more uſual in young men, who have come raw into company with good fortunes and ill breeding. But it is too true alſo that too many never looſe the habit, but are as moroſely poſitive in their Age, as they were childiſhly ſo in their Youth. Indeed 'tis impoſſible they ſhould be otherwiſe, unleſs they have the wit to diſentangle themſelves firſt from the love of Flattery, and after from the company of Flatterers: for (as I have before obſerv'd) no vice will ever wither under their ſhade. I think I ſhall do the Reader no ill office to let in a little light upon them, and ſhew him ſome of thoſe many miſchiefs that attend this unworthy practice.

This folly engages to perjuries.

12. Firſt it engages a man to Oaths, and for ought he knows to Perjuries. When he has lancht out boldly into an incredible relation, he thinks he has put his Credit upon the forlorn hope, and muſt take care to relieve it: and there is no ſuccour ſo conſtantly ready at hand as that of Oaths and Imprecations, and therefore whole vollies of them are diſcharged upon the doubtful. Thus do we make God a witneſs, and our ſouls parties in the cauſe of every trifling rumor, as if we had model'd our Divinity by the Scheme of that Jeſuitical Caſuiſt, who legitimates the Killing of a man for an Apple.

And alſo to quarrels.

13. A ſecond miſchief is, that it betraies a man to quarrels. He that is peremtory in his own Story, may meet with another that is as peremtory in the contradiction of it, and then the two Sr. *Poſitives* muſt have a skirmiſh indeed. He that has atteſted the truth of a falſe, or the certainty of a doubtful thing, has brought himſelf into the ſame ſtrait with *Balaam's* Aſs, he muſt either fall down flat or run upon a ſword, Num. 22. 27. For if his Hearers do but expreſs a diffidence, either he muſt ſink to a downright Confeſſion that he was a Liar, or elſe he muſt huff and bluſter till perhaps he raiſes a counter-ſtorm, and as he fool'd himſelf out of his truth, ſo be beaten out of the pretence to it. Indeed there is ſcarce any quality that do's ſo temt and invite affronts as this do's: for he that can deſcend to ſuch a meanneſs, may reaſonably enough be preſumed to have little (as of true worth, ſo) even of that which the world calls Gallantry, and ſo every puny ſword-man will think him a good tame Quarry to venture and fleſh himſelf upon.

Likewiſe it expoſes to contemt.

14. In the third place it expoſes him to all the contemt and ſcorn which either good or ill men can fling upon him: the good abominate the ſin, the ill triumph over the folly of it. The truth is there can be nothing more wretchedly mean. To be a Knight of the Poſt to every fabulous relation, is ſuch a ſordid thing, that there can ſcarce any name of reproch be too vile for it. And certainly he that can pawn his faith upon ſuch miſerable terms, will by thoſe frequent morgages quickly be ſnapt upon a forfeiture: or however will have his credit ſo impair'd by it, that no man will think his word a competent gage for the ſlighteſt concern.

The attemt to gain credit to a preſent affirmation, deſtroies it for the future.

15. And this may paſs for a fourth conſideration, That this poſitiveneſs is ſo far from gaining credit to his preſent affirmation, that it deſtroys it for the future: for he that ſees a man make no difference in the confidence of his aſſerting realities and fictions, can never take his meſures

by any thing he avers, but according to the common Proverb, will be in danger of disbelieving him even when he ſpeaks truth. And of this no man can want conviction, who will but conſult his own obſervation. For what an allay do we find it to the credit of the moſt probable event, that it is reported by one who uſes to ſtretch? Thus unhappily do ſuch men defeat their own deſigns: for while they aver ſtoutly that they may be believed, that very thing makes them doubted, the world being not now to learn how frequently Confidence is made a ſupplement for truth. Nor let any man who uſes this, flatter himſelf that he alone do's (like *Job*'s meſſenger) eſcape the common fate: for tho' perhaps he meet with ſome who in civility or pity will not diſpute the probability of his narrations, or with others who for raillery will not diſcourage the humor with which they mean (in his abſence) to divert themſelves, yet he may reſt aſſur'd he is diſcern'd by all and derided for it.

Wiſe men avoid the reporting improbable truths.

16. It therefore concerns men who either regard their truth, or their reputation, not to indulge to this humor, which is the moſt ſilly way of ſhipwracking both. For he that will lay thoſe to ſtake upon every flying ſtory, may as well wager his eſtate which way the wind will ſit next morning, there being nothing leſs to be confided in, than the breath of fame, or the whiſpers of private tale-bearers. Wiſe men are afraid to report improbable truths: what a fool hardineſs is it then to atteſt improbable falſities, as it often is the luck of theſe Poſitive men to do?

An unconcern'd relation, is moſt likely to gain belief.

17. Certainly there is nothing which they deſign by this, which may not be obtain'd more effectually by a modeſt and unconcern'd relation. He that barely relates what he has heard, and leaves the hearer to judg of the probability, do's as much (I am ſure more civilly) entertain the company, as he that throws down his gauntlet in atteſtation. He as much ſatisfies the itch of telling news; he as much perſwades his hearers: nay very much more (for theſe over earneſt aſſeverations ſerve but to give men ſuſpicion that the Speaker is conſcious of his own falſneſs:) and all this while he has his retreat ſecure, and ſtands not reſponſible for the truth of his relation. Nay indeed tho' men ſpeak never ſo known and certain truths, 'tis moſt adviſable not to preſs them too importunately. For boldneſs, like the Bravoes and Banditti, is ſeldom emploied but upon deſperate ſervices, and is ſo known a Pander for lying, that truth is but defam'd by its attendance.

Modeſty is a moſt powerful ſcheme of Oratory.

18. To conclude, modeſty is ſo amiable, ſo inſinuating a thing, that all the rules of Oratory cannot help men to a more agreeable ornament of diſcourſe. And if they will try it in both the foregoing inſtances, they will undoubtedly find the effects of it: a modeſt propoſal will ſooneſt captivate mens reaſons, and a modeſt relation their belief.

SECT. XII.

Of Obſcene Talk.

Obſcenity ſeems to verify the fiction of brute beaſts talking together.

1. THere is another vice of the Tongue which I cannot but mention, tho' I know not in which of the former Claſſes to place it: not that it comes under none, but that 'tis ſo common to all, that 'tis not eaſy to reſolve to which peculiarly to aſſign it, I mean obſcene and immodeſt Talk, which is offenſive to the purity of God, damageable and infectious to the

innocence of our Neighbors, and moſt pernicious to our ſelves: and yet is now grown a thing ſo common, that one would think we were fallen into an Age of Metamorphoſis, and that the Brutes did (not only Poetically and in fiction, but) really ſpeak. For the talk of many is ſo beſtial, that it ſeems to be but the conceptions of the more libidinous Animals clothed in humane Language.

This renouncing of reaſon and ingenuity, paſſes for wit.

2. And yet even this muſt paſs for Ingenuity, and this vile deſcent below Humanity, muſt be counted among the higheſt ſtrains of Wit. A wretched debaſement of that ſprightful Faculty, thus to be made the interpreter to a Goat or Boar: for doubtleſs had thoſe creatures but the organs of Speech, their Fancies lie enough that way to make them as good company, as thoſe who more ſtudiouſly apply themſelves to this ſort of entertainment.

Its peſtilent corruption cannot be diſcuſſed without ſtench and danger of contagion.

3. The crime is comprehenſive enough to afford abundance of matter for the moſt Satyrical zeal, but I conſider the diſſecting of putrid Bodies may caſt ſuch peſtilential fumes, as all the benefits of the ſcrutiny will not recompenſe. I ſhall therefore in reſpect to the Reader diſmiſs this noiſom Subject, and thereby give an example with what abhorrence he ſhould alwaies reject ſuch kind of diſcourſe, remembring the advice of St. *Paul, That all uncleanneſs ſhould not be once named among thoſe who would walk as becometh Saints*, Eph. 5. 3.

The Cloſe.

The government of the tongue has now an additional difficulty from the licence of the age.

1. I Have now touched upon thoſe enormities of Speech which I principally deſign'd to obſerve, wherein I have bin far from making a full and exact Catalogue: therfore I would have no man take this little Tract for a juſt Criterion, by which to try himſelf in reference to his words. Yet God grant that all that read it, may be able to approve themſelves even by this imperfect eſſay: and he that do's ſo, makes fair approches towards being *that perfect man* St. *James* ſpeaks of, Jam. 3. 1. theſe being ſuch faults of the Tongue as are the harder to avoid, becauſe they are every day exemplified to us in common practice, (nay ſome of them recommended as reputable and ingenuous.) And it is a ſtrange inſinuative power which example and cuſtom have upon us. We ſee it in every trivial ſecular inſtance, in our very habit: thoſe dreſſes which we laughed at in our forefathers wardrobes or pictures, when by the circulation of time and vanity they are brought about, we think very becoming. 'Tis the ſame in our diet: our very palates conform to the faſhion, and every thing grows amiable to our fancies, according as 'tis more or leſs received in the world. And upon this account all ſobriety and ſtrict vertue lies now under a heavy prejudice, and no part of it more, than this of the Tongue, which cuſtom has now enfranchiz'd from all the bonds Moraliſts or Divines had laid upon it.

The greatneſs of difficulty ought to awake diligence.

2. But the greater the difficulties are, the more it ought to awake our diligence: if we lie looſe and careleſly, 'tis odds we ſhall be carried away with the ſtream. We had need therefore fix our ſelves, and by a ſober recollection of the ends for which our Speech was given us, and the account we muſt one day give of it, impreſs upon our ſelves the baſeneſs and the danger of miſemploying it. Yet a negative innocence will not ſerve our turns, 'twill but put us in the condition of him, *who wrapt up the talent he was commanded to employ*, Matth. 25. 25. Nay indeed

'twill be impoſſible to preſerve even that if we aſpire no farther. The Tongue is a buſie active part, will ſcarce be kept from motion: and therefore if that activity be not determin'd to good objects, 'twill be practiſing upon bad. And indeed I believe a great part of its licentiouſneſs is owing to this very thing. There are ſo few Themes of diſcourſe in uſe, that many are driven to the ill for want of better. Learning is thought Pedantic, Agriculture Peaſant-like, and Religion the moſt inſufferable of all: ſo by excluding all uſeful Subjects to converſe, we come together as St. *Paul* (in other caſes) ſaies, *Not for the better, but for the worſe*, 1 Cor. 11. 17. And if the Philoſopher thought he had loſt that day wherein he had not learnt ſomthing worthy his notice, how many daies do we worſe than loſe, by having them not only emty of ſolid uſeful acquiſitions, but full of noxious and pernicious ones? And indeed if they be the one, they will not miſs to be the other alſo: for the mind is like the ſtomach, which if it be not ſupplied with wholſome nouriſhment, will at laſt ſuck in thoſe humors with which the body moſt abounds. So that if in our converſe we do not enterchange ſober notions, we ſhall at the beſt but traffique toies and baubles, and moſt commonly infection and poiſon. He therefore that would keep his tongue from betraying himſelf or others to ſin, muſt tune it to a quite contrary Key, make it an inſtrument, an incentive to vertue, by which he ſhall not only ſecure the negative part of his duty, but comply with the poſitive alſo, in employing it to thoſe uſes for which it was given him.

All ſpeech ought to tend to the glory of God,

3. It would be too vaſt an undertaking to preſcribe to particular ſubjects of ſuch diſcourſe, nay indeed impoſſible, becauſe many of them are occaſional, ſuch as cannot aforehand be reduced to any certain account. This only in the general we may reſt upon, that all ſpeech tending to the glory of God, or the good of man, is aright directed. Which is not to be underſtood ſo reſtrictively, as if nothing but Divinity or the neceſſary concerns of humane life, may lawfully be brought into diſcourſe: ſomething is to be indulged to common civility, more to the intimacies and endearments of friendſhip, and a competency to thoſe recreative diſcourſes which maintain the chearfulneſs of ſociety; all which are, if moderatly uſed, within the latitude of the rule, as tending (tho' in a lower degree) to the well being of men, and by conſequent to the honour of God, who indulges us thoſe innocent refreſhments. But if the ſubordinate uſes come to incroach upon the higher, if we dwell here and look no farther, they then become very ſinful by the exceſs which were not ſo in their nature. That inordinacy ſets them in oppoſition to Gods deſignation, in which they were allowed only a ſecondary place. We ſhould therefore be careful to improve all opportunities of letting our tongues pay their more immediate homage to God, in the duty of prayers and praiſes, making them not only the interpreters of our pious affections, but the promoters of the like in others. And indeed he can ſcarce be thought in earneſt, who praies, *Hallowed be thy name*, and do's not as much endeavour it with men, as he ſolicites it from God.

And the good of our neighbour.

4. And if we anſwer our obligations in this point, we ſhall in it diſcharge the higheſt part of our duty to man alſo: for in whoſe heart ſoever we can implant a true reverential awe of God, we ſow the ſeed of immortality, of an endleſs happy being, the greateſt the moſt ſuperlative good whereof he is capable. Beſides in the interim, we do by it help to manumit and releaſe him from thoſe ſervile drudgeries to vice, under which thoſe remain who live without God in the world. And theſe indeed are benefits worthy

thy the dignity of humane nature to communicate. And it is both ſad and ſtrange to ſee among the multitude and variety of Leagues that are contracted in the world, how few there are of the pious combinations; how thoſe who ſhew themſelves concern'd in all the petty ſecular intereſts of their friends, never take this at all into their care; a pregnant evidence how little true friendſhip there is among men.

The care of others is ill ſhifted off to divines.

5. I know ſome think they ſufficiently excuſe themſelves when they ſhift off this office to Divines, whoſe peculiar buſineſs they ſay it is. But this is as if one who ſees a poor fainting wretch, ſhould forbear to adminiſter a Cordial he has at hand, for fear of intrenching on the Phyſitians Faculty. Many opportunities a Friend or Companion may have which a Divine may want. He often ſees a man in the very fit, and ſo may more aptly apply: for where there is an intimacy of Converſe, men lay themſelves open, diſcover thoſe paſſions, thoſe vices, which they carefully veil when a ſtrange, or ſeverer eie approches. Beſides, as ſuch a one may eaſier diſcern the diſeaſe, ſo he has better advantages for adminiſtring remedies: ſo Children will not take thoſe Medicines from the Doctors hand, which they will from a Nurſe or Mother: and we are uſually too Childiſh in what relates to our Souls; look on good counſel from an Eccleſiaſtic as a Divinity Potion, and ſet our ſtomachs againſt it; but a Familiar may inſenſibly inſinuate it into us, and ere we are aware beguile us into health. Yet if Lay Perſons will needs give the Clergy the incloſure of this office, they ſhould at leaſt withdraw thoſe impediments they have laied in their way, by depoſiting thoſe prejudices which will certainly fruſtrate their endeavor. Men have in theſe later daies bin taught to look on Preaching as a thing of form to the hearers, and of profit only to the Speakers, a *craft whereby*, as *Demetrius* ſaies, *They get their living*, Acts 19. 25. But admit it were ſo in this laſt reſpect, yet it do's not infer it ſhould be ſo in the former. If it be a Trade, 'twas ſure thought (as in all Ages but this) a very uſeful one, or elſe there would never have bin ſuch incouragement given to it. No State ever allotted publick certain Salaries for a ſet of Men that were thought utterly uſeleſs: and if there be uſe to be made of them, ſhall we looſe our advantages merely becauſe they gain theirs? We are in nothing elſe ſo ſenſeleſs: no man will refuſe counſel from a Phyſician, becauſe he lives by the Profeſſion. 'Tis rather an argument on his ſide, that becauſe ſuch an intereſt of his own depends on it, he has bin the more induſtrious to fit himſelf for it. But not to run farther in this digreſſion, I ſhall apply it to my purpoſe, by making this equitable propoſal, that Lay men will not ſo moralize the common Fable, as neither to admoniſh one another themſelves, nor ſuffer Miniſters to do it without them. And truly 'tis hard if neither of them can be granted when both ought. I am ſure all is little enough that can be done, tho' we ſhould have as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Precept upon precept, Line upon line, here a little and there a little*, Iſ. 28. 13. Mans nature is ſo unattentive to good, that there can ſcarce be too many monitors. We ſee *Satan* tho' he have a much ſtronger party in our inclinations, dares not rely upon it, but is ſtill employing his emiſſaries, to confirm and excite them, and if whilſt he has ſo many Agents among us, God ſhall have none, we are like to give but an ill account of our zeal either to God or our neighbor, or of thoſe tongues which were given us to glorify the one, and benefit the other. Indeed without this, our greateſt officiouſneſs in the ſecular concerns of others is no kindneſs. When we ſtrive to advance the fame, to increaſe the fortune of a wicked man, what do we do in it, but enable him to do the more miſchief, by his wealth to foment his own luxuries, and by his repu-

tation commend them to the practice of others? He only makes his friend truly rich and great who teaches him to employ thoſe advantages aright: and would men turn their tongues to this ſort of Oratory, they would indeed ſhew they underſtood for what ends they were given them.

Or confin'd to friends and relations.

6. But as all good receives enhancement from its being more diffuſive, ſo theſe attemts ſhould not be confined to ſome one or two intimates or relatives, but be as extenſive as the common needs, or at leaſt as our opportunities. 'Tis a generous ambition to benefit many, to oblige communities: which can no way ſo well be don, as by endeavoring to ſubvert vicious cuſtoms, which are the peſt and poiſons of all ſocieties. The heathens had many ceremonies of luſtrations for their cities and countries, but he that could purify and refine their manners, would indeed attain to the ſubſtance of thoſe ſhadows. And becauſe the Apoſtle tells us that *Evil words corrupt good manners*, 'twould be a fundamental piece of reformation, to introduce a better ſort of converſe into the world: which is an inſtance ſo agreeable to my preſent ſubject, that I cannot Cloſe more pertinently, than to commend the endeavor to the Reader, which if he have bin by this Tract at all convinced of the ſin and miſchief of thoſe Schemes of diſcourſe decyphered in it, cannot be more juſt to his convictions, than by attemting to ſupplant them.

'Twere a uſefull attemt to ſet a pattern of innocent and entertaining diſcourſe.

7. It were indeed a deſign worthy of a noble ſoul, to try to new model the Age in this particular, to make it poſſible for men, to be at once converſable and innocent. I know 'twill be objected, 'tis too vaſt a project for one or many ſingle Perſons to undertake: yet difficulties uſe to animate generous ſpirits, eſpecially when (as here) the very attemt is laudable. But as *Chriſt* ſaies of Wiſdom, ſo may we of Courage. The Children of this world are more daring than the Children of light. The great corrupters of diſcourſe have not bin ſo diſtruſtful of themſelves: for 'tis viſible to any that will reflect, that 'tis within a mans memory ſince much of this monſtrous exorbitancy of diſcourſe grew in faſhion, particularly the Atheiſtical and Blaſphemous. The firſt propugners of it were but few, and durſt then but whiſper their black rudiments, yet the world now ſees what a Harveſt they have from their deviliſh induſtry.

Which could not fail to reliſh with men not utterly vitiated.

8. And ſhall we give over our Clime as forlorn and deſperate, and conclude that nothing which is not venomous will thrive in our Soil. Would ſome of parts and autority but make the experiment, I cannot think that all places are yet ſo vitiated, but that they may meet with many, who would reliſh ſober and ingenuous diſcourſe, and by their example be animated to propagate it to others, but as long as Blaſphemy, Ribauldry, and Detraction, ſet up for Wit, and carry it without any competition, we do implicitly yield that title we diſpute not: and 'tis hard to ſay whether their triumphs be more owing to the boldneſs of ill men, or the puſillanimity of the good. What if upon the trial they ſhould meet with the worſer part of St. *Pauls* fate at Athens, *That ſome will mock*, Acts 17. 32. yet perhaps they may partake of the better alſo, and find others that would be willing to *hear them again*, and ſome few at leaſt *may cleave unto them*. And ſure they are too tender and delicate, that will run no hazard, nor be willing to bear a little ſhare in that prophane drollery, with which an Apoſtle was, and their God is daily aſſaulted: eſpecially when by this expoſing themſelves, they may hope to give ſome check to that impious liberty. However beſides the ſatisfaction of their own conſciences, they may alſo gain this advantage by the attemt, that it may be a good teſt by which to try their company. For thoſe whom they find impatient of in-

nocent and profitable converſe, they may aſſure themſelves can only enſnare not benefit them; and he is a very weak Gameſter, that will be drawn to play upon ſuch terms, as make it highly probable for him to loſe, but impoſſible for him to win. Therefore in that caſe the advice of *Solomon* is very proper, *Go from the preſence of a fooliſh man, when thou perceiveſt not in him the lips of Knowledg*, Prov. 14. 7.

The undertaker in this deſign muſt be ſure to be true to his pretenſions.

9. But he that will undertake ſo Heroic an enterprize, muſt qualifie himſelf for it, by being true to his own pretenſions. He muſt leave no uneven thred in his loom, or by indulging to any one ſort of reprovable diſcourſe himſelf, defeat all his endeavors againſt the reſt. Thoſe aery Speculators that have writ of the Philoſophers Stone, have required many Perſonal qualifications, ſtrict abſtinences and purities in thoſe who make the experiment. The thing may have this ſober application, that thoſe who would turn this Iron Age into Gold, that would convert our ruſty droſſy Converſe into a purer ſtrein, muſt be perfectly clean themſelves. For alaſs what effect can that man hope from his moſt zealous reprehenſions, who laies himſelf open to recrimination? He that hears a man bitterly inveigh againſt Blaſphemy and profaneſs, and yet (in that almoſt the ſame breath) hears his monitor inveigh as bitterly againſt his Neighbor, will ſcarce think him a good guide of his tongue, that has but half the maſtery of his own. Let every man therefore be ſure to begin at the right end of his work, to waſh his own mouth clean, before he preſcribe Gargariſms to others. And to that purpoſe let him impartially reflect on all the undue liberties he has given his tongue, whether thoſe which have bin here remarked, or thoſe others which he may find in all Practical books, eſpecially in (the moſt Practical of all books) his own Conſcience. And when he has trac'd his talk thro' all its wild rambles, let him bring home his ſtray; not like the loſt ſheep with joy, but with tears of penitence and contrition, and keep a ſtrict watch over it that it break not loſe again; nay farther require it to make ſome reſtitution for the treſpaſs it has committed in its former excurſions, to reſtore to God what it has rob'd of his Honor, by devoting it ſelf an inſtrument of his ſervice; to his Neighbor what it has detracted from him, by wiping off that ſullage it has caſt upon his Fame; and to himſelf by defacing thoſe ill Characters of vanity and folly it has imprinted on him. Thus may the Tongue cure its own ſting, and by a kind of Sympathetic vertue, the wound may be healed by dreſſing the weapon. But alaſs when we have done all, the Tongue is ſo ſlippery that it will often be in danger to deceive our watch: nay it has a ſecret intelligence with the heart, which like a corrupted Goaler is too apt to connive at its eſcape. Let us therefore ſtrengthen our guards, call in him who ſees all the ſecret practices of our treacherous hearts, and commit both them and our tongues to his cuſtody. Let us ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Try me, O Lord, and ſeek the ground of my heart*, Pſal. 129. 23. And with him again, *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips, O let not my heart be inclined to any evil thing*, Pſal. 141. 3. And if *hand thus join in hand*. Prov. 16. 5. if God's grace be humbly invoked, and our own endeavour honeſtly emploied, even this *unruly evil* of the Tongue (as St. *James* calls it Chap. 3. 8.) may be in ſome degree tamed. If now and then it get a little out by ſtealth, yet it will not like the Demoniac be ſo raving, as quite to break all its chains. If we cannot alwaies ſecure our ſelves from inadvertence and ſurprize, but that a forbidden word may ſomtimes eſcape us, yet we may from deliberate wilful offences of the Tongue. And tho' we ſhould all aſpire higher, yet if we can but reach this, we ought not to

excuſe our ſelves (upon remaining infirmities) from the Chriſtian generous undertaking, I was recommending, the reforming of others. Indeed I had made a very impertinent exhortation to that, if this degree of fitneſs may not be admitted; for I fear there would be none on earth could attemt it upon other terms: the world muſt ſtill remain as it is, and await only the Tongues of Angels to reduce it. Nor need we fear that cenſure of Hypocriſy which we find, *Matt.* 7. 5. for the caſe is very differing. 'Tis indeed as ridiculous as inſolent an attemt, for one that has a Beam in his own eie, to pretend to caſt a Mote out of his Brothers: but it holds not on the contrary, that he that has a Mote in his own, ſhould not endeavour to remove the Beam in his brothers. Every ſpeck do's not blind a man, nor do's every infirmity make one unable to diſcern, or incompetent to reprove the groſſer faults of others.

The man of vertue, if he do not reform others, will not loſe his pains ſince he will ſave himſelf.

10. Yet after all let us as much as is poſſible clear our eies even of this mote, and make our Copy as worth tranſcribing as we can: for certainly the beſt inſtrument of reformation is example: and tho' admonition may ſomtimes be neceſſary, yet there are many circumſtances required to the right ordering of that, ſo that it cannot alwaies be practicable, but a good example ever is. Beſides it has a ſecret magnetic vertue, like the Loadſtone it attracts by a power of which we can give no account: ſo that it ſeems to be one of thoſe occult qualities, thoſe ſecrets in nature, which have puzled the inquirers, only experience demonſtrates it to us. I am ſure it do's (too abundantly) in ill examples, and I doubt not might do the like in good, if they were as plentiful experimented. And that they may be ſo, let every man be ambitious to caſt in his mite: for tho' two make but a farthing, yet they may be multiplied to the vaſteſt ſum. However if a man cannot reform others, yet I am ſure 'twill be worth his while, ſo to *ſave himſelf from this untoward generation*, Acts 2. 40. I have now preſented the Tongue under a double aſpect, ſuch as may juſtify the ancient Definition of it, that it is the worſt and beſt part of man, the beſt in its original and deſign, and the worſt in its corruption and degeneration. In David the man after Gods heart it was his *glory*, Pſal. 57. 8. *The beſt member that he had*, Pſal. 108. 1. *But in the wicked it cuts like a ſharp Razor*, Pſ. 52. 2. *'Tis as the venom of Aſps*, Pſ. 140. 3. The Tongues from heaven were *Cloven* Acts 2. 2. to be the more diffuſive of good: but thoſe that are *fired from hell* are forked, *Jam.* 3. 6. to be the more impreſſive of miſchief: it muſt be referred to every mans choice, into which of the forms he will mould his. Solomon tells us *Death and Life are in the power of the Tongue*, and that not only directly in regard of the good or ill we may do to others, but reflectively alſo, in reſpect of what may rebound to our ſelves. Let *Moſes* then make the inference from *Solomon*'s premiſes, *Therefore chuſe life*, Deut. 30. 15. a propoſal ſo reaſonable, ſo agreeable to nature, that no flouriſhes can render it more inviting. I ſhall therefore leave it to the Readers contemplation, and ſhall hope that if he pleaſe but to revolve it with that ſeriouſneſs which the importance exacts, he will new ſet his tongue, compoſe it to thoſe pious Divine ſtreins, which may be a proper preludium to thoſe Allelujahs he hopes eternally to ſing.

FINIS.

THE

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THE
ART
OF
CONTENTMENT.

The PREFACE.

The deſire of happineſs is the firſt and moſt univerſal impreſſion upon nature.

THE deſire of happineſs is ſo coeſſential with our nature, ſo interwoven and incorporate with it; that nothing but the diſſolution of the whole frame can extinguiſh it. This runs thro' the whole race of mankind, and amidſt the infinite variety of other inclinations, preſerves it ſelf entire. The moſt various contradictory tempers do yet conſpire in this, and men of the moſt unequal fortunes, are yet equal in their wiſhes of being happy.

This concurrence in the end is not more univerſal than the diſagreement about the way.

But this concurrence as to the end is not more univerſal than the diſagreement about the way. Every man would have happineſs, but wherein that conſiſts, or how it is to be attain'd, has bin diverſly opin'd. Indeed the ultimate ſupreme happineſs as it is originally inherent in God, ſo it is wrapt up in thoſe clouds and darkneſs, which as the Pſalmiſt ſaies, are round about him, Pſal. 18. 11. And we can ſee nothing of it, but in thoſe gleams and raies he is pleas'd to dart out upon us; ſo that all our eſtimates as to our final felicity, muſt be meſur'd by thoſe revelations he has made of it.

Even temporal happineſs ſeems to be a myſtery.

But one would think our temporal happineſs were as much a myſtery as our eternal, to ſee what variety of blind purſuits are made after it. One man thinks 'tis ſeated on the top pinnacle of honor, and climbs till perhaps he falls head-long. Another thinks it a mineral, that muſt be dig'd out of the earth, and toils to lade himſelf with thick clay, Hab. 2. 9. and at laſt finds a grave, where he ſought his treſure. A third ſuppoſes it conſiſts in the variety of pleſures, and wearies himſelf in that purſuit, which only cloies and diſappoints. Yet every one of theſe can read you lectures of the groſs miſtake and folly of the other, whilſt himſelf is equally deluded.

The purſuit of imaginary goods, is anſwered by diſappointment.

Thus do men chaſe an imaginary good, till they meet with real evils; herein expoſing themſelves to the ſame cheat Laban put upon Jacob, they ſerve for Rachel, and are rewarded with Leah, court fancied beauty, and marry loath'd deformity. Such deluſive felicities as theſe are the largeſſes of the Prince of the Air, who once attemted to have enveigled even Chriſt himſelf, Matt. 4.

Almighty God propoſes a ſhort and eaſy method for the attaining happineſs, the being contented.

But God's propoſals are more ſincere: he knows how ſandy, how falſe a foundation all theſe external things muſt make, and therefore warns us not to build ſo much as our preſent ſatisfaction upon them, but ſhews us a more certain, a more compendious way to acquire what we gaſp after, by telling us that as Godlineſs in reſpect of the next, ſo Contentment for this world is great gain, 1 Tim. 6. 6. It is indeed the Unum neceſſarium, the one point in which all the lines of worldly happineſs are concentred, and to complete its excellence, 'tis to be had at home: nay indeed only there. We need not ramble in wild purſuits after it, we may form it within our own breaſts: no man wants materials for it, that knows but how to put them together.

The directing to this skill is the deſign of the enſuing Tract.

And the directing to that skill is the only deſign of the enſuing Tract, which coming upon ſo kind an errand, may at leaſt hope for an unprejudic'd reception. Contentment is a thing we all profeſs to aſpire to, and therefore it cannot be thought an unfriendly office to endeavor to conduct men to it. How far the enſuing conſiderations may tend to that end, I muſt leave to the judgment, and experience of the Reader, only deſiring him that he will weigh them with that ſeriouſneſs which befits a thing wherein both his happineſs and duty are concern'd: for in this (as in many other inſtances) God has ſo twiſted them together, that we cannot be innocently miſerable. The preſent infelicities of our murmurs and impatiences, have an appendant guilt, which will conſign us to a more irreverſible ſtate of diſſatisfaction hereafter.

THE

Art of Contentment.

Sect. I.

Of the neceſſary Connexion between Happineſs and Contentment.

Gods deſign in the creation, was not to receive acceſſion to his own happineſs, but communicate it to others.

I. GOD who is eſſentially happy in himſelf, can receive no acceſſion to his felicity by the poor contributions of men. He cannot therefore be ſuppos'd to have made them upon intuition of increaſing, but communicating his happineſs. And this his original deſign is very viſible in all the parts of his œconomy towards them. When lapſed man had counterplotted againſt himſelf, defeated the purpoſe of the Divine goodneſs, and plung'd his whole nature into the oppoſite ſtate of endleſs miſery; he yet reinforc'd his firſt deſign, and an expedient as full of wonder as mercy, the death of his Son, recovers him to his former capacity of bliſs. And that it might not only be a bare capacity, he has added all other methods proper to work upon a rational creature. He has ſhewed him his danger, ſet before him in perſpective that eternal Tophet, which he is adviſ'd to ſhun. On the other ſide he has no leſs lively deſcrib'd the heavenly Jeruſalem, the Celeſtial country to which he is to aſpire: nay farther has levell'd his road to it, leads him not as he did the Iſraelites thro' the wilderneſs, thro' intricate mazes, to puzle his underſtanding; thro' *a land of drought, wherein were fiery Serpents and Scorpions,* Deut. 8.15. to diſcourage and affright him: but has in the Goſpel chalkt out a plain, a ſafe, nay a pleaſant path; as much ſuperior both in the eaſe of the way, and in the end to which it leads, as Heaven is to Canaan.

The ſecuring this happineſs to men is the buſineſs of Chriſtian religion.

2. By doing this he has not only ſecured our grand and ultimate happineſs, but provided for our intermedial alſo. Thoſe Chriſtian duties which are to carry us to heaven, are our refreſhments, our viaticum in our journey: his yoke is not to gall and fret us, but an engine by which we may with eaſe (and almoſt inſenſibly) draw all the clogs and incumbrances of human life. For whether we take Chriſtianity in it's whole complex, or in it's ſeveral and diſtinct branches, 'tis certainly the moſt excellent, the moſt compendious art of happy living: it's very tasks are rewards, and it's precepts are nothing but a divine ſort of Alchymy, to ſublime at once our nature and our pleaſures.

And moſt particularly expreſt in the precept of acquieſcence and contentment.

3. This may be evidenc'd in every particular of the Evangelical law: but having formerly made ſome attempt towards it in another * Tract, I ſhall not here reaſſume the whole ſubject. I ſhall only ſingle out one particular precept, wherein happineſs is not (as in the others) only implied, and muſt be catcht at the rebound by conſequence and event; but is

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* *Decay of Chriſtian Piety.*

literally expreſt, and is the very matter of the duty; I mean the precept of acquieſcence and *Contentment*, Happineſs and this true genuine Contentment, being terms ſo convertible, that to bid us be content, is but another phraſe for bidding us be happy.

4. Temporal enjoiments, ſuch as are pleaſure, wealth, honor, and the reſt, tho' they make ſpecious pretences to be the meſure of human happineſs, are all of them juſtly diſcarded by the Philoſopher in his Ethics, upon this one conſideration, that coming from abroad they may be with-held or taken from us: and our tenure being precarious, we even for that reaſon are unhappy in our moſt deſiderable poſſeſſions, becauſe we are ſtill liable to be ſo. And therefore he concludes, that felicity muſt be placed in the mind and ſoul, which ſtands without the reach of fortune; and in the practice of vertue, which in its own nature, and not in its contingent uſe is truly good, and therefore certainly renders the poſſeſſors ſuch.

Temporal enjoyments are juſtly diſcarded by heathen philoſophy, which lodges felicity in the practice of vertue.

5. But this practice being diffuſed thro' the whole extent of Moral duty, *Epictetus* thought he had deſerved well of human nature, when he drew it up in two ſhort words, to *ſuſtain* and *abſtain*: that is, to bear with conſtancy adverſe events, and with moderation enjoy thoſe that are proſperous. Which complexure of Philoſophy is yet more fully, as well as more compendiouſly expreſt in the ſingle notion of *Contentment*: which involves the patient bearing of all miſadventures, and generous contemt of ſenſual illectives. This ſtate of mind the Greeks expreſs by calling it αὐτάρκεια or ſelf-ſufficiency, which, we know properly ſpeaking, is one of the incommunicable attributes of the Divine nature: and the Stoics expreſly pretend, that by it mortal men are enabled to rival their God; in *Seneca*'s phraſe to make a controverſy with *Jupiter* himſelf. But abating the inſolent blaſphemy of an independent felicity, Chriſtianity acknowledges a material truth in the aſſertion: and St. *Paul* declares of himſelf, that having *learnt how to want and how to abound, and in whatever ſtate he happens to be in, therewith to be content: he is able to do all things thro' Chriſt that ſtrengthens him*, Phil. 4. 11, 12, 13. *and having nothing, to poſſeſs all things*, 1 Cor. 6. 10.

A compendium whereof is the before-mention'd duty of contentment.

6. Which great event comes about, not only becauſe all good things are eminently in the Divine nature, and he who by vertue and Religion poſſeſſes Him, thereby in a full equivalence has every thing; but alſo upon human meſures, and the principles of Philoſophy: the compendious addreſs to wealth, as *Plato* rightly obſerv'd, being not to encreaſe poſſeſſions, but leſſen deſires. And if ſo, 'twill follow that the contented man muſt be abundantly provided for, being ſo entirely ſatisfied with what he has, as to have no deſires at all. Indeed 'tis truly ſaid of covetous men, and is equally verified of all who have any deſire to gratify, that they want no leſs what they have, than what they have not: but the reverſe of that Paradox is really made good by *Contentment*, which beſtows on men the enjoiment of whatever they have, and alſo whatever they have not: and by teaching to want nothing, abundantly ſecures not to want happineſs.

The contented perſon tho' he has nothing, poſſeſſes all things.

7. On the other ſide this one grace being abſent, it is not in the power of any ſucceſs or affluence to make life a tolerable thing. Let all the materials of earthly happineſs be amaſt together, and flung upon one man, they will without contentment be but like the fatal prize of *Tarpeia*'s treaſon, who was preſt to death with the weight of her booty. He that has the elements of felicity, and yet cannot form them into a ſatiſfaction, is more deſperately miſerable than he that wants them: for he who wants has yet ſomthing to hope for, and thinks if he had them he might be happy; but he who inſignificantly poſſeſſes them, has no reſerve, has not ſo much as the

Without this no ſucceſs or affluence can make happy.

Flattery of an expectation: for he has nothing left to deſire, and yet can be as little ſaid to enjoy.

Outward goods are the earthy part and droſs of happineſs; content is the ſpirit.

8. He therefore that would have the extract, the quinteſſence of happineſs, muſt ſeek it in Content. All outward acceſſions are but the droſs and earthy part; this alone is the ſpirit, which when 'tis once ſeparated, depends not upon the fate of the other; but preſerves it's vigor when that is deſtroy'd. St. *Paul* whom I before mention'd, is a ready inſtance of it, who profeſſes to be *content in whatever ſtate;* Contentment being not ſo inſeparately link'd to external things, but that they may ſubſiſt apart. That thoſe are often without it we are too ſure, and that it may be without them is as certainly true; tho' by our own default we have not ſo many examples of it. A heart that rightly computes the difference between temporals and eternals, may reſolve with the Prophet, *Altho' the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be on the vines, the labor of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat, the flocks ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herds in the ſtall; yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation,* Hab. 3. 17, 18. He that has God, need not much deplore the want of any thing elſe: nor can he that conſiders the plenty and glory of his future ſtate, be much dejected with the want or the abjectneſs of his preſent.

Both the one and other are indulg'd by God in this world.

9. Yet ſo indulgent is God to our infirmities, that knowing how unapt our impatient natures are to *walk* only *by faith, and not at all by ſight,* 2 Cor. 5. 7. he is pleaſed to give us fair antepaſts of ſatisfaction here, diſpenſes his temporal Bleſſings tho' not equally, yet ſo univerſally, that he that has leaſt, has enough to oblige not only his acquieſcence, but his thankfulneſs. Tho' every man has not all he wiſhes, yet he has that which is more valuable than that he complains to want; nay which he himſelf could worſe ſpare, were it put to his option.

All men are ſo much beyond their merit provided for; that 'tis a wonder any ſhould be diſcontents.

10. And now from ſuch a diſpoſure of things who would not expect that mankind ſhould be the cheerfulleſt part of the creation: that the *ſun ſhould* not more *rejoyce to run his courſe,* Pſal. 19. 5. than man ſhould to finiſh his: that a journy which has ſo bleſſed an end, and ſuch good accommodation by the way, ſhould be paſt with all imaginable alacrity, and that we ſhould live here practicers and learners of that ſtate of unmix'd interminable joies to which we aſpire. But alas if we look upon the univerſality of men, we ſhall find it nothing ſo; but while all other creatures gladſomly follow the order of their creation, take pleaſure in thoſe things God has aſſign'd for them, we with ſullen perverſeneſs quarrel at what we ſhould enjoy, and in every thing make it our buſineſs, not to fit it for our uſe, but to find ſome concealed quality which may render it unfit. We look inſidiouſly upon our bleſſings, like men that deſign'd only to pick a quarrel, and ſtart a pretence for mutining. From hence it is that man who was deſign'd the Lord of the world, to whoſe ſatisfactions all inferior beings were to contribute, is now the unhappieſt of the creatures: nay as if the whole order of the univerſe were inverted, he becomes ſlave to his own vaſſals, courts all thoſe ſublunary things with ſuch paſſion, that if they prove coy and fly his embraces, he is mad and deſperate: if they fling themſelves into his Arms, he is then glutted and ſatiated; like *Amnon he hates more than he loved,* 2 Sam. 13. 15. and is ſicker of his poſſeſſion, than he was of his deſire.

The entertaining irregular deſires, makes our ſatisfaction impoſſible

11. And thus will it ever be till we keep our deſires more at home, and not ſuffer them to ramble after things without our reach. That honeſt Roman, who from his extraordinary induſtry upon his little ſpot of ground

received ſuch an increaſe, as brought him under ſuſpicion of witchcraft, is a good example for us. God has plac'd none of us in ſo barren a ſoil, in ſo forlorn a ſtate, but there is ſomthing in it which may afford us comfort; let us husband that to the utmoſt, and 'tis ſcarce imaginable what improvements even he that appears the moſt miſerable may make of his condition. But if in a ſullen humor we will not cultivate our own field, becauſe we have perhaps more mind to our neighbors, we may thank our ſelves if we ſtarve. The deſpiſing of what God has already given us, is ſure but a cold invitation to farther bounty. Men are indeed forced ſometimes to reward the mutinous: but God is not to be ſo attaqued, nor is it that ſort of violence which can ever force Heaven. The Heathen could ſay that *Jupiter* ſent his plagues among the poorer ſort of men, becauſe they were alwaies repining: and indeed there is ſo much truth in the obſervation, that our impatience and diſcontent at our preſent condition, is the greateſt provocation to God to make it worſe.

This is equally repugnant to intereſt and duty.

12. It muſt therefore be reſolv'd to be very contrary to our Intereſt, and ſurely 'tis no leſs to our Duty. It is ſo if we do but own our ſelves men, for in that is imploy'd a ſubordination and ſubmiſſion to that power that made us ſo; and to diſpute his managery of the world, to make other diſtributions of it than he has done, is to renounce our ſubjection, and ſet up for dominion. But this is yet more intolerable as we are Chriſtians, it being a ſpecial part of Evangelical diſcipline, chearfully to conform to any condition: to *know how to be abaſed, and how to abound, to be full and to be hungry*, Phil. 4. 12. *to be careful for nothing*, ver. 6. Nay ſo little do's Chriſt give countenance to our peeviſh diſcontents, our wanton outcries when we are not hurt, that he requires more than a contentment, an exultancy and tranſport of joy even under the heavieſt preſſures, under reproches and perſecutions. *Rejoyce ye in that day, and leap for joy*, Luke 6. 23. And ſure nothing can be more contrary to this, than to be alwaies whining and complaining, crying in the Prophets phraſe, *my leaneſs, my leaneſs, wo is me*, Iſa. 24. 16. when perhaps *Moſes*'s ſimile do's better fit our ſtate, *Jeſurun waxed fat, and kicked*, Deut. 32. 15.

And alſo our eaſe.

13. And as this querulous humor is againſt our intereſt and duty, ſo it is viſibly againſt our eaſe. 'Tis a ſickneſs of the mind, a perpetual gnawing and craving of the appetite without any poſſibilty of ſatisfaction: and indeed is the ſame in the heart which the *Caninus appetitus* is in the ſtomach; to which we may aptly enough apply that deſcription we find in the Prophet, *he ſhall ſnatch on the right hand and be hungry, and he ſhall eat on the left and not be ſatisfied*, Iſa. 9. 20. Where this ſharp, this fretting humor abounds, nothing converts into nouriſhment: every new acceſſion do's but excite ſome new deſire; and as 'tis obſerv'd of a trencher-fed dog, that he taſts not one bit for the greedy expectation of the next, ſo a diſcontented mind is ſo intent upon his purſuits, that he has no reliſh of his acqueſts. So that what the Prophet ſpeaks of the Covetous, is equally appliable to all other ſorts of Male-contents: *he enlarges his deſires as hell, and is as death, and cannot be ſatisfied*, Hab. 2. 5. And ſure if the *deſire accompliſhed* be as *Solomon* ſaies *ſweet to the ſoul*, Prov. 13. 19. it muſt be exceeding bitter, to be thus condemned to endleſs unaccompliſhable deſires; and yet this is the torture which every repining uncontented ſpirit provides for it's ſelf.

In ſo ſenſual an age as this we live in, one would expect what is uneaſy ſhould be avoided.

14. What a madneſs is it then for men to be ſo deſperately bent againſt their intereſt and duty, as to renounce even their eaſe too for company? One would think this age were ſenſual enough to be at defiance with the leaſt ſhadow of uneaſineſs. It is ſo I am ſure where it ought not: every thing

is laborious when 'tis in compliance with their duty ; a few minutes ſpent in prayer, *Oh what a wearineſs is it* ! Mal.2.19. If they chance but to miſs a meal, they are ready to cry out, their *knees are weak thro' faſting*, Pſal. 109. 3. yet they can without regret, or any ſelf-compaſſion, macerate and cruciate themſelves with anxious cares and vexations, and, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks 1 Tim.6.10. *pierce themſelves thro' with many ſorrows*. That propoſal therefore which was very raſhly made by St. *Peter* to our Savior, *Maſter pity thy ſelf*, Mat. 16. 22. which we render *be it far from thee*, would here be an adviſed motion to the generality of mankind, who are commonly made unhappy not by any thing without them, but by thoſe reſtleſs impatiencies that are within them.

The whole affair will be uſefully brought to rational conſideration,

15. It may therefore be a ſeaſonable office to endeavor the appeaſing theſe ſtorms, by recalling them to thoſe ſober rational conſiderations, which may ſhew as well the folly, as uneaſineſs of this repining unſatisfiable humor. 'Tis certain that in true reaſoning, we can find nothing whereon to found it, but a great deal to enforce the contrary. Indeed 'tis ſo much againſt the dictate of reaſonable nature to affect dammage, ſin, and torment, that were there nothing elſe to be ſaid but what I have already mention'd, it might competently diſcover the great unreaſonableneſs of this ſin.

And reduced to ſeven diſtinct heads.

16. But we need not confine our appeal to reaſon, as it is only a judge of utility and advantage; but enlarge it to another notion, as it is judge of equity and right: in which reſpect alſo it gives as clear and peremtory a ſentence againſt all murmuring and impatience. To evince this I ſhall inſiſt upon theſe particulars. 1. That God is debtor to no man, and therefore what ever he affords to any, it is upon bounty, not of right, a benevolence not a due. 2. That this bounty is not ſtreight or narrow, confin'd to ſome few particular perſons, and wholly overskipping the reſt, but more or leſs univerſally diffuſed to all. So that he who has the leaſt, cannot juſtly ſay but he has been liberally dealt with. 3. That if we compare our bleſſings with our allaies, our good things with our evil, we ſhall find our good far ſurmounting. 4. That we ſhall find them yet more ſo, if we compare them with the good we have done, as on the contrary we ſhall find our afflictions ſcarce diſcernible if ballanc'd with our ſins. 5. That as God is the Rector of the univerſe, ſo it appertains to him to make ſuch allotments, ſuch diſtributions, as may beſt preſerve the ſtate of the whole. 6. That God notwithſtanding that univerſal care, has alſo a peculiar aſpect on every particular perſon, and diſpoſes to him what he diſcerns beſt for him in ſpecial. 7. If we compare our adverſities with thoſe of other men, we ſhall alwaies find ſomthing that equals if not exceeds our own. All theſe are certain irrefragable truths, and there is none of them ſingle but may, if well preſt upon the mind, charm it into calmneſs and reſignation ; but when there is ſuch a conſpiration of arguments, it muſt be a very obſtinate perverſneſs that can reſiſt them : or ſhould they fail to enforce a full conviction ; will yet introduce thoſe ſubſidiary proofs, which I have to alledge, ſo advantageouſly, as will being put together amount unto perfect and uncontroulable Evidence.

Sect. II.

Of Gods abſolute Soveraignty.

God is debtor to no man.

1. THE firſt propoſition that God is debtor to no man, is too clear and apparent to require much of illuſtration: for as he is a free agent and may act as he pleaſes, ſo he is the ſole proprietary and can wrongfully detain from none, becauſe all original right is in himſelf. This has been ſo much acknowledg'd by the blindeſt Heathens, that none of them durſt make inſolent addreſſes to their Gods, challenge any thing of them as of debt, but by ſacrifices and praiers own'd their dependence and wants, and implor'd ſupplies. And ſure Chriſtianity teaches us not to be more ſaucy. If thoſe Deities who ow'd their very being to their votaries, were yet acknowledg'd to be the ſpring and ſource of all, we can with no pretence deny it to that ſupreme power in whom *we live, and move, and have our being*, Acts 17.28. For if it were merely an act of his choice to give us a being, all his ſubſequent bounties can have no other original than his own good pleaſure. We could put no obligation upon God before we were: and when we began to be, we were his creatures, and ſo by the moſt indiſputable right owe our ſelves to him, but can have no antecedent title on which to claim any thing from him: ſo that the Apoſtle might well make the challenge which he doth on God's behalf, *who hath given any thing unto him, and it ſhall be recompenc'd unto him again?* Rom. 11.25.

Therefore no man can demand any thing from him.

2. Now ordinary diſcretion teaches us not to be too bold in our expectations from one to whom we can plead no right. It has as little of prudence as of modeſty, to preſs impudently upon the bounty of a Patron, and do's but give him temptation (at leaſt pretence) to deny. And if it be thus with men, who poſſibly may ſometimes have an intereſt, ſometimes a vanity to oblige us; it muſt much more be ſo towards God, who cannot be in want of us, and therefore need not buy us: *our good*, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *extends not to him*. Pſ. 16.2. He has a fundamental right in that little we are, which will ſtand good tho' it ſhould never be corroborated by greater benefits. With what an humble baſhfulneſs ſhould we then ſue for any thing, who have no argument to invite the leaſt donation? being already ſo preingag'd, that we cannot mortgage ſo much as our ſelves in conſideration of any new favor: and ſurely extravagant hopes do very ill befit people in this condition. We ſee the modeſty of good *Mephiboſheth*, who tho' he was by a ſlanderous accuſation outed of half the eſtate *David* had given him, yet upon a reflection that he deriv'd it all from his good pleaſure, diſputed not the ſentence, but chearfully reſign'd the whole to the ſame diſpoſure, from which he receiv'd it, ſaying, *Yea let him take all*, 1 Sam. 19.30. A rare example and fit for imitation, as being adapted to the preſent caſe, not only in that one circumſtance of his having receiv'd all from the King, but alſo in that of the attainder of his blood, which he confeſſes in the former part of the verſe, for *all my fathers houſe were but dead men before my Lord.* And alas may we not ſay the very ſame? Was not our whole race tainted in our firſt parent? So that if God had not the primary title of vaſſalage, he would in our fall have acquir'd that of confiſcation and eſcheat. And can we think our ſelves then in terms to capitulate and make our own conditions, and expect God ſhould humor us in all our wild demands?

3. This

The doing ſo is defiance to God.

3. This is indeed to keep up that old rebellion of our Progenitor, for that conſiſted in a diſcontent with that portion God had aſſign'd him, and coveting what he had reſtrain'd him. Nay indeed it comes up to the height of the Devils propoſal, the attemting *to be as God*, Gen. 3. 5. For 'tis an endevor to wreſt the managery out of his hands, to ſuperſede his Autority of diſpenſing to us, and to carve for our ſelves. This is ſo mad an inſolence, that were it poſſible to ſtate a caſe exactly parallel between man and man, it would raiſe the indignation of any that but pretended to ingenuity. Yet this is, without Hyperbole, the true meaning of every murmuring repining thought we entertain.

Which tho' a great, is a general inſolence and injuſtice.

4. But as bad as it is, who is there of us, that can in this particular ſay, *We have made our heart clean*? Prov. 20. 9. 'Tis true we make ſome formal acknowledgment ſomtimes that we receive all from Gods gift, cuſtom teaches us from our infancy after every meal we eat to give him thanks (tho' even that is now thought too much reſpect, and begins to be diſcarded as unfaſhionable.) Yet ſure he cannot be thought to do that in earneſt, that has all the time of his eating bin grumbling that his table abounds not with ſuch delicacies as his neighbors. And yet at this rate God knows are moſt of our thankſgivings. Indeed we have not ſo much ordinary civility to God, as we have to men. The common proverb teaches us not too curiouſly to pry into the blemiſhes of what is given us: but on Gods gifts we ſit as Cenſors, nicely examine every thing which is any way diſagreeable to our fancies, and as if we dealt with him under the notion of chapmen, diſparage it, as *Solomon* ſaies buyers uſe to do, *it is naught, it is naught ſaith the buyer*, Prov. 20. 14. Nay we ſeem yet more abſurdly to change the ſcene, and as if God were to make oblations to us, we as critically obſerve the defects of his benefactions, as the Levitical Prieſts were to do thoſe of the ſacrifice, and (like angry Deities) ſcornfully reject, what ever do's not perfectly anſwer our wanton appetites.

And a high provocation of God to withdraw what he has given.

5. And now ſhould God take us at our words, withdraw all thoſe bleſſings which we ſo faſtidiouſly deſpiſe, what condition were we in? 'Tis ſure we have nothing to plead in reverſe of that judgment. There is nothing in it againſt juſtice: for he takes but his own. This he intimates to *Iſrael*, Hoſ. 2. 9. I will *return and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the ſeaſon thereof, and will recover my wooll and my flax*: in which he aſſerts his own propriety, my corn, my wine, &c. and recalls them to the remembrance that they were but uſufructuaries: and 'tis as evident that our tenure is but the ſame. Nay this proceeding would not be repugnant even to mercy, for even that is not oblig'd ſtill to proſtitute it ſelf to our contemt. I am ſure ſuch a tolerance is beyond all the meaſures of human lenity. Should any of us offer an alms to an indigent wretch, and he when he ſees 'tis Silver, ſhould murmur and exclame that it is not Gold, would we not draw back our hand, and reſerve our charity for a more worthy object? 'Tis true indeed God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor our narrow bowels equal meaſures for the divine compaſſions, and we experimentally find that his long-ſuffering infinitly exceeds ours: yet we know he do's in the parable of the Lord and the ſervant, *Matt.* 18. declare that he will proportion his mercy by ours in that inſtance; and we have no promiſe that he will not do it in this: nay we have all reaſon to expect that he ſhould; for ſince his wiſdom prompts him to do nothing in vain, and all his bounty to us is deſign'd to make us happy, when he ſees that end utterly fruſtrated by our diſcontents, to what purpoſe ſhould he continue that to us which we will be never the better for?

Tho' God Almighty be patient, yet he is not inſenſible.

6. Beſides tho' he be exceedingly patient, yet he is not negligent or inſenſible; he takes particular notice, not only with what diligence we employ, but with what affections we reſent every of his bleſſings. And as ingratitude is a vice odious to men, ſo it is extremely provoking to God: ſo that in this ſenſe alſo, the words of our Saviour are moſt true, *from him that hath not* (*i. e.*) that hath not a grateful ſenſe and value, *ſhall be taken away even that he hath*, Matt. 25. 29. But we may find a threatning of this kind yet more expreſs to *Iſrael, becauſe thou ſervedſt not the Lord thy God with gladneſs and with joyfulneſs of heart for the abundance of all things, therefore ſhalt thou ſerve thine enemies, whom the Lord God will ſend among thee, in hunger and in thirſt and in nakedneſs and in want of all things, Deut.* 28. 27, 28. a ſad and diſmal inverſion, yet founded wholly in the want of that chearful recognition which God expected from them. And if *Iſrael* the lot of his own inheritance, that people whom he had ſingled out from all the nations of the world, could thus forfeit his favor by unthankfulneſs, ſure none of us can ſuppoſe we have any ſurer entail of it. In a word as God loves a chearful giver, ſo he alſo loves a chearful receiver: one that complies with his end in beſtowing, by taking a juſt complacence in his gifts. But the querulous and unſatisfied, reproch his bounty: accuſe him of illiberality and narrowneſs of mind. So that he ſeems even in his honor engag'd to bring them to a righter apprehenſion of him, and by a deprivation teach them the value of thoſe good things, which they could not learn by the enjoyment.

If ſenſe of duty cannot perſwade againſt murmuring, conſideration of intereſt ſhould do it.

7. If therefore ingenuity and gratitude cannot, yet at leaſt let prudence and ſelf-love engage us againſt this ſin of *Murmuring*, which we ſee do's abundantly juſtify the Character the Wiſe man gives when he tells us *'tis unprofitable*, Wiſd. 1. 11. he might have ſaid pernicious alſo, for ſo it evidently is in its effects. Let us then arm our ſelves againſt it, and to that purpoſe impreſs deeply upon our minds the preſent conſideration, that God ows us nothing, and that what ever we receive is an alms, and not a tribute. *Diogenes* being asked what wine drank the moſt pleſant, anſwered, that which is drunk at anothers coſt. And this circumſtance we can never miſs of to recommend our good things to us: for be they little or much, they come gratis. When therefore in a pettiſh mood we find our ſelves apt to charge God fooliſhly, and to think him ſtrait-handed towards us, let us imagine God expoſtulating with us, as the houſholder in the parable, *Friend I do thee no wrong: is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own*? Matt. 20. 15. If God have not the right of diſpoſing, let us find out thoſe that have, and ſee how much better we ſhall ſpeed: but if he hath, let us take heed of diſputing with him. We that ſubſiſt merely by his favor, had need court and cheriſh it by all the arts of humble obſervance. Every man is ready to ſay how ill beggary and pride do agree. The firſt qualification we cannot put off; O let us not provide it of the other ſo inconvenient, ſo odious an adjunct. Let us leave off preſcribing to God (which no ingenuous man would do to an earthly benefactor) and let us betake our ſelves to a more holy and ſucceſsful policy, the acknowledgment of paſt mercies, and our own unworthineſs. This was *Jacob's* method, *I am not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou haſt ſhewed unto thy ſervant: for with my ſtaff I paſſed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands*, and with this humble preface he introduces his petition for reſcue in his preſent diſtreſs, *Deliver me I pray thee from the hand of my brother*, &c. Gen. 32. 10, 11. An excellent pattern of Divine Rhetoric, which the ſucceſs demonſtrates to have bin

very prevalent. And we cannot tranſcribe a better copy, to render our deſires as ſucceſsful. Indeed we are ſo utterly deſtitute of all arguments from our ſelves, that we can make no reaſonable form of addreſs, if we found it not in ſomething of God: and there is nothing even in him adapted to our purpoſe, but his mercy, nor can that be ſo advantageouſly urged by any thing, as by the former inſtances it has given of it ſelf: for as God only is fit to be a precedent to himſelf, ſo he loves to be ſo. Thus we find, not only *Moſes*, but God often recollecting his miraculous favors towards *Iſrael*, as an argument to do more: let us therefore accoſt him in his own way, and by a frequent and grateful recounting of his former mercies, engage him to future. Nor need we be at a loſs for matter of ſuch recollection, if we will but ſeriouſly conſider what we have already received, which is the ſubject of the next Section.

SECT. III.

Of Gods Unlimited Bounty.

Ingratitude is the moſt criminal imputation which can be fixt upon a man.

1. IT is the known character of an unworthy nature, to write injuries in Marble, and benefits in Duſt: and however ſome (as *Seneca* well obſerves) may acquit themſelves of this imputation as to man, yet ſcarce any do ſo in relation to God. 'Tis true indeed the charge muſt be a little varied; for God neither will nor can do us injury: yet we receive any thing that is adverſe with ſuch a reſentment as if it were, and engrave that in our memories with indelible characters, whilſt his great and real benefits are either not at all obſerv'd, or with ſo tranſient an advertence, that the compariſon of duſt is beyond our pitch, and we may be more properly ſaid to write them in water. Nay ſo far are we from keeping records and regiſters of his favors, that even thoſe ſtanding and fixt ones which ſenſe can promt us to (without the aid of our memories) cannot obtain our notice.

All complaining is founded in this.

2. Were it not thus, it were impoſſible for men to be ſo perpetually in the complaining Key, as if their voices were capable of no other ſound. One wants this, and another that, and a third ſomething beyond them both, and ſo on *ad infinitum*; when all this while every one of them enjoies a multitude of good things without any remark. That very breath wherewith they utter their complaints, is a bleſſing, and a fundamental one too: for if God ſhould withdraw that, they were incapable of whatſoever elſe they either have, or deſire. 'Tis true that ſome mens impatiencies have riſen ſo high, as to caſt away life, becauſe it was not clothed with all circumſtances they wiſht. Yet theſe are rare inſtances, and do only ſhew ſuch mens deprav'd judgment of things. A rich Jewel is not the leſs valuable, becauſe a mad man in his raving fit flings it into the fire: but as to the generality of men, the devil (tho' a liar) gave a true account of their ſenſe, when he ſaid, *Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life*, Job 2. 4. And tho' perhaps in an angry fit many men have with *Jonas*, Chap. 4. 3. *wiſht to die*, yet ten to one ſhould death then come, they would be as willing to divert it, as was the man in the Apologue, who wearied with his burden of ſticks, flung it down and call'd for death, but when he came, own'd no other occaſion for him, but to be helpt up again with his bundle. I dare in this appeal to the experience of thoſe, who have ſeem'd very weary of life, whether when any ſuddain danger has ſurpriſed them, it has not as ſuddainly altered their mind, and

made them more deſire life, than before they abhor'd it. 'Tis the common ſaying, As long as there is life there is hope: there is ſo as to ſecular concerns, for what ſtrange revolutions do we often ſee in the age of a man? From what deſpicable beginnings have many arriv'd to the moſt ſplendid conditions? Of which we have divers modern as well as ancient inſtances. And indeed 'tis admirable to ſee what time and induſtry will (with Gods bleſſing) effect. *But there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave*, Eccl. 9. 10. we can improve no more when we are once tranſplanted thither.

And is the worſt diſpoſal of time.

3. But this is yet much more conſiderable in reſpect of our ſpiritual ſtate. Our life is *the day wherein we are to work*, Joh. 9. 4. (yea to work our ſalvation:) but *when the night comes* (when death overtakes) *no man can work*. Now alas when 'tis conſider'd how much of this day the moſt of us have loiter'd away, how many of us have ſtood idle till the ſixth or ninth hour, it will be our concern not to have our day cloſe before the eleventh. Nay alas 'tis yet worſe with us: we have not bin idle, but very often ill buſied; ſo that we have a great part of our time to unravel, and that is not to be done in a moment. For tho' our works may fitly enough be repreſented by the Prophets compariſon of a *ſpiders web*, Iſa. 59. 5. yet they want the beſt property even of that; they cannot be ſo ſoon undone. Vices that are radicated by time and cuſtom, lie too deep to be lightly ſwept away. 'Tis no eaſy thing to perſwade our ſelves to the will of parting with them. Many violences we muſt offer to our ſelves, a long and ſtrict courſe of mortification muſt be gone thro', ere we can find in our hearts to bid them be gone: and yet when we do ſo, they are not ſo tractable as the Centurions ſervants. They will indeed come whenever we bid them, but they will ſcarce go ſo: they muſt be expell'd by force and ſlow degrees; we muſt fight for every inch of ground we gain from them: and as God would not aſſiſt the *Iſraelites* to ſubdue the *Canaanites* at once, Deut. 7. 22. ſo neither ordinarily do's he us to maſter perfectly our corruption. Now a proceſs of this difficulty is not to be diſpatcht on a ſudden. And yet this is not all our task, for we have not only ill habits to extirpate, but we have alſo good ones to acquire: 'tis not a mere negative vertue will ſerve our turns, nor will emty lamps enter us into the marriage chamber, Mat. 25. 10. *We muſt add to our faith vertue, and to vertue knowledg, and to knowledg temperance*, &c. 2 Pet. 1. 5. No link muſt be wanting of that ſacred chain, but we muſt (as the ſame Apoſtle adviſes) *be holy in all manner of converſation*, 1 Pet. 1. 15.

If eternity be ſecur'd, men may have leiſure to regret the want of temporal goods, but would be ſtrangely unreaſonable to complain, who had happily ſecur'd that greateſt intereſt.

4. And now I would deſire the Reader ſeriouſly to conſider, whether he can upon good grounds tell himſelf that this ſo difficult (and yet ſo neceſſary a work) is effectually wrought in him. If it be, he is a happy man, and can with no pretence complain of any external want: (he that is fed with *Manna*, muſt be ſtrangely perverſe if he murmur for a belly-full of *leeks and onions*, Num. 11. 5.) But on the contrary he owes infinite thanks to God, that has ſpared him time for this important buſineſs, and did not put a period to his natural life, before he had begun a ſpiritual. For I fear there are among the beſt of us few of ſo entire an innocence, but they may remember ſome, either habits or acts of ſin, in which it would have bin dreadful for them to have bin ſnatcht away. And then how comprehenſive, how prolific a mercy has life bin to them, when it has carried eternity in its womb, and their continuance on earth has qualified them for heaven? Neither are ſuch perſons only to look on it as a bleſſing in the retroſpect, as it relates to the paſt, but alſo in the preſent and future: which

if they continue to employ well, do's not only confirm, but advance their reward. Beſides God may pleaſe by them to glorify himſelf, make them inſtrumental to his ſervice; which as it is the greateſt honor, ſo it is alſo the greateſt ſatisfaction to a good heart. He ſhews himſelf too mercenary that ſo longs for his reward, as to grow impatient in his attendances: he that loves God, thinks himſelf bleſt in the opportunity of doing work, as well as in receiving wages. Thus we ſee how life is under all theſe aſpects a mercy to a pious man, and ſuch as not only obliges him to contentment, but gratitude.

If they cannot give this comfortable account of life, they ought not to complain, it being their fault: and the worſe their ſtate is, the greater is the mercy of forbearance.

5. But ſuppoſing a man cannot give this comfortable account of his life, but is conſcious, that he has ſpent it to a very different purpoſe, yet do's not that at all leſſen his obligations to God, who meant he ſhould have employ'd it better, and that he has not done ſo is merely his own fault. Nay indeed the worſe his eſtate is, the greater mercy it is, that God has not yet made it irreverſible, that he has not cut him off at once from the earth and the poſſibility of heaven too, but affords him yet a longer *day, if* yet *he will hear his voice*, Pſal.95.7. This long-ſuffering is one of the moſt tranſcendent acts of divine goodneſs, and therefore the Apoſtle rightly ſtiles it *the riches of his goodneſs and long-ſuffering and forbearance*, Rom. 2.4. and ſo at laſt we commonly acknowledge it, when we have worn it out, and can no longer receive advantage by it. What a value do's a gaſping deſpairing ſoul put upon a ſmall parcel of that time, which before he knew not how faſt enough to ſquander? O that men would ſet the ſame eſtimate on it before, and then certainly, as it would make them better husbands of it, ſo it would alſo render them more thankful for it, *accounting that the long-ſuffering of our Lord is Salvation*, 2 Pet. 3. 15.

The benefit of life upon this ſcore, that it affords the means of repentance, is ineſtimable.

6. Indeed did men but rightly compute the benefit of life upon this ſcore, all ſecular encumbrances and uneaſineſſes of it would be overwhelmed, and ſtand only as Cyphers in the account. What a ſhame is it then that we ſhould ſpend our breath in ſighs and out-cries? which if we would employ to thoſe nobler ends for which 'twas given, would ſuperſede our complaints, and make us confeſs we were well dealt with, that *our life* (tho' bare and ſtript of all outward acceſſaries) *is given us for a prey*, Jer.45.5. And indeed he that has yet the great work of life to do, can very ill ſpare time or ſorrow to beſtow upon the regretting any temporal diſtreſs, ſince his whole ſtock is little enough to bewail and repair his neglects of his eternal concerns. Were all our lives therefore deſtitute of all outward comfort, nay were they nothing but a ſcene of perpetual diſaſters, yet this one advantage of life would infinitly outweigh them all, and render our murmurings very inexcuſable.

Life involves ſeveral great temporal mercies.

7. But God has not put this to the utmoſt trial, has never plac'd any man in ſuch a ſtate of unmixt calamity, but that he ſtill affords many and great allaies: he finds it fit ſomtimes to defalk ſome of our outward comforts, and perhaps imbitter others, but he never takes all away. This muſt be acknowledg'd, if we do but conſider how many things there are in which the whole race of mankind do in common partake. The four Elements, fire and water, air and earth, do not more make up every mans compoſition, than they ſupply his needs: the whole hoſt of heaven, the Sun, Moon and Stars, *Moſes* will tell us, are by *God divided to all Nations under the whole heaven*, Deut.4. 19. Thoſe reſplendent bodies equally afford their light and influence to all. The Sun ſhines as bright on the poor Cottage, as on the moſt magnificent Palace; and the Stars have their benign Aſpects, as well for him, that *is behind the mill*, as for *him that ſitteth*

on the Throne, Exod. 11. 5. Propriety (that great incendiary below) breeds no confuſion in thoſe celeſtial Orbs, but they are every mans treſure, yet no mans peculiar (as if they meant to teach us, that our love of appropriation *deſcends not from above*, Jam. 3. 15. is no heavenly quality.)

Which without reſtraint are given to all.

8. And as they make no diſtinction of the ranks and degrees of men, ſo neither do they of their vertues. Our Saviour tells us, God cauſes *his Sun to riſe on the good and on the evil, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt*, Matt. 5. 45. If now we deſcend lower to the ſublunary creatures, they equally pay their homage to man, do not diſdain the dominion of the poor, and ſubmit to that of the rich, but ſhew us that their inſtinct extends to the whole nature. An horſe draws the poor mans plough, as tamely as the Princes chariot, and the Beggars hungry Cur follows him with as much obſequiouſneſs and affection as the pamper'd lap-dogs of the niceſt Ladies. The ſheep obey a poor mercenary ſhepherd as well as they did the Daughters of the wealthy *Laban*, Gen. 29. 9. or of *Jethro* a Prince, Exod. 2. 16. and as willingly yield their fleeces to clothe *Lazarus*, as to make purple for *Dives*. And as animals, ſo vegetables are as communicative of their qualities to one man as another. The corn nouriſhes, the fruits refreſh, the flowers delight, the ſimples cure the poor man as well as the rich.

And of which there are ſome that cannot be encloſ'd.

9. But I foreſee it will be objected, that theſe natural privileges are inſignificant, becauſe they are evacuated by thoſe poſitive laws which bound propriety, and that therefore tho' one man could uſe the creatures as well as another, yet every man has them not to uſe. I anſwer, that for ſome of the things I have mention'd, they are ſtill in their native latitude, cannot be inclos'd or monopoliz'd. The moſt ravenous oppreſſor could never yet lock up the ſun in his cheſt: *he that laies houſe to houſe, or land to land, till there be no place*, Eſa. 58. cannot incloſe the common air: and the like may be ſaid of divers of the reſt, ſo that there are ſome (and thoſe no mean) bleſſings, which continue ſtill the indefeiſible right of mankind in general.

And thoſe that admit of reſtriction by propriety, are yet acquirable by labor.

10. As for thoſe other things which are liable to the reſtrictive terms of *meum* and *tuum*, 'tis not to be deny'd but there is vaſt difference in the diſpenſing them; as great as *Nathan*'s parable deſcribes, when he ſpeaks of the numerous flocks of the rich man, and the *ſingle ewe lamb of the poor*, 2 Sam. 12. 2. yet there is ſcarce any ſo deplorably indigent, but that by one means or other, he has or may have the neceſſary ſupports of life. Perhaps they fall not into his lap by birth-right and inheritance, yet they are acquirable by labor and induſtry, which is perhaps the better tenure. They cannot it may be arrive to *Sodoms fulneſs of bread*: yet if they have not her *abundance of Idleneſs*, Ez. 16. 49. they commonly need not want that, which was the height of *Agur*'s wiſh, *food convenient*, Prov. 30. 8. 'Tis true indeed, if they will fold their hands in their boſom, if with *Solomon*'s *ſluggard, they will not plough by reaſon of the cold*, they muſt take his fate in the ſummer, as they have his eaſe in the winter, *they may beg in harveſt, and have nothing*, Prov. 20. 4. but then 'tis viſible they are the Authors of their own neceſſities. And indeed to men of ſuch lazy careleſs natures, 'tis hard to ſay, what degree of Gods bounty can keep them from want, ſince we often ſee the faireſt fortunes diſſipated as well by the ſupine negligence, as the riotous prodigality of the owners. And therefore if men will be idle, they are not to accuſe God, but themſelves if they be indigent.

Even the moſt forlorn conditions of ſickneſs and age, have ſuitable reliefs aſſign'd to them.

11. But then there is one caſe wherein men ſeem more inevitably expos'd; and that is when by age, ſickneſs, or decrepitneſs, they are diſabled from work; or when their family is too numerous for their work to maintain.

And this indeed ſeems the moſt forlorn ſtate of poverty: yet God has provided for them alſo, by aſſigning ſuch perſons to the care of the rich; nay he has put an extraordinary mark of favor on them, given them the honor of being his proxies and repreſentatives, made them letters of Attorny (as it were) to demand relief in his Name, and upon his account. And tho' 'tis too true, that even that Autority will not prevail with many of the rich to open their purſes, yet even in this Age of frozen charity, there are ſtill ſome who remember upon what terms they received their wealth, and employ it accordingly. And tho' the nnmber of them is not ſo great as were to be wiſht, yet there are in all parts ſome ſcattered here and there, like *Cities of refuge* in the Land, Deut. 19. 2. to which theſe poor diſtreſſed creatures may flee for ſuccor. And I think I may ſay, that between the legal proviſions that are made in this caſe and voluntary contributions, there are not very many that want the things that are of abſolute neceſſity: and we know St. *Paul* comprizes thoſe in a ſmall compaſs, *food and raiment*, and propoſes them as ſufficient materials of Content, 1 Tim. 6. 8. I ſay not this to contract any mans bowels, or leſſen his compaſſions to ſuch poor wretches. For how much ſoever they lend, I wiſh as *Joab* did in another caſe to *David*, the Lord *increaſe it an hundred fold*, 2 Sam. 24. 3. I only urge it as an evidence of the aſſertion I am to prove, that no man is ſo pretermitted by God or his diſpoſal of temporals, but that even he that ſeems the moſt abandon'd has a ſhare in his providence, and conſequently cannot juſtly murmur, ſince even this ſtate which is the higheſt inſtance of human indigence, is not without its receits from God.

The number of utterly forlorn perſons is very ſmall.

12. But the number in this form are but few, compar'd to thoſe in a higher: for between this and the higheſt affluence, how many intermedial degrees are there, in which men partake not only of the neceſſaries, but comforts of life; that have not only food and raiment, but their diſtinction of holy-day and working-day fare and apparel? He that is but one ſtep advanced from beggary has ſo much, he that has got to a ſecond has more than is neceſſary: and ſo every degree riſes in plenty till it comes to vanity and exceſs. And even there too there are gradual riſings, ſome having ſo much fewel for luxury, that they are at as great a loſs for invention, as others can be for materials, and complain that there are no farther riots left for them to eſſay. How many are there who have ſo cloy'd and glutted their ſenſes, that they want ſome other inlets for pleaſure, and with the rich man in the Goſpel, are in diſtreſs where to beſtow their abundance?

That deſtitution is not the ground of diſcontent, is manifeſt for that they moſt repine who have the greateſt affluence.

13. And ſure ſuch as theſe cannot deny that they have received good things, yet generally there are none leſs contented; which is a clear demonſtration, that our repinings proceed not from any defect of bounty in God, but from the malignant temper of our own hearts. And as it is an eaſier thing to ſatisfy the cravings of an hungry, than to cure the nauſeous recoilings of a ſurfeited ſtomach; ſo certainly the diſcontents of the poor, are much eaſier allay'd than thoſe of the rich: the indigence of the one has contracted his deſires, and has taught him not to look farther than a little beyond bare neceſſaries, ſo that a moderate Alms ſatisfies, and a liberal tranſports him: but he who by a perpetual repletion has his deſires ſtretcht and extended, is capable of no ſuch ſatisfaction: when his enjoyments fore-ſtall all particular purſuits, and he knows not upon what to faſten his next wiſh; yet even then he has ſome confus'd unform'd appetites, and thinks himſelf miſerable, becauſe he cannot tell what would make him more happy. And yet this is that envy'd ſtate which men with

ſo much greedineſs aſpire to: every man looks on it as the top of felicity to have nothing more to wiſh in the world. And yet alas even that when attain'd, would be their torment. Let men never think then that Contentment is to be caught by long and forreign chaſes; he is likelieſt to find it who ſits at home, and duly contemplates thoſe bleſſings which God has brought within his reach, of which every man has a fair proportion, if he will advert to it.

Every man is a principality within himſelf.

14. For beſides theſe external acceſſions (of which the meaneſt have ſome, the middle ſort a great deal, and the uppermoſt rather too much) man is a principality within himſelf, and has in his compoſure ſo many excellent impreſſes of his Makers power and goodneſs, that he need not ask leave of any exterior thing to be happy, if he know but aright how to value himſelf. The very meaneſt part of him, his body is a piece of admirable workmanſhip, of a moſt incomprehenſible contrivance, as the Pſalmiſt ſaies, *He is fearfully and wonderfully made*; and 'tis aſtoniſhing to think of what a ſymmetry of parts this beautiful fabrick is made up. Nor are they only for ſhew, but uſe: every member, every limb is endowed with a particular faculty to render it ſerviceable to the whole; and ſo admirable is the contexture of veins and arteries, ſinews and muſcles, nerves and tendons, that none are ſuperfluous, but ſome way or other contribute to vegetation, ſenſe, or motion. Nay the moſt noble and moſt uſeful parts are all of them double, not only as a reſerve in caſe of miſadventure of one part; but alſo as an inſtance of the bounty of the Donor. And indeed it is obſervable of *Galen* in his writings, that after he had taken great care to exemt himſelf and all of his profeſſion from taking notice of the Deity, by ſaying that to diſcourſe concerning the Gods, was the task of ſpeculative Philoſophers; yet coming to write *De uſu partium*, and conſidering the frame of human bodies, and therein diſcovering the wonderful contrivance of every part in reference to its ſelf, and alſo to the whole; their ſtrength, agility, and various movement, infinitly ſurpaſſing the powers of all Mechanic engines; he ſeems to have had the fate we read of *Saul* in holy Scripture, and againſt his genius and purpoſe to become a Prophet; breaking frequently out into Hymns and ſacred raptures; ſaying, theſe Myſteries are more divine than the *Samothracian* or *Eleuſinian*; and confeſſing they both ſtrictly require and infinitly excell the low returns of human praiſe. But beyond the fabric of parts as organic, what an extract of wonder are our ſenſes, thoſe *five operations of the Lord*, as the ſon of *Syrach* rightly (and by way of eminence) ſtiles them, Ecclus. 17. 5? By theſe we draw all outward objects to our ſelves. What were the beauties of the univerſe to us, if we had not ſight to behold them, or the moſt melodious ſounds, if we had not hearing? and ſo of the reſt. And yet theſe are not only generally given, but alſo preſerv'd to the greater part of men: and perhaps would be to more, did not our baſe undervaluing of common mercies, force God ſometimes to inſtruct us in their worth, by making us feel what it is to want them.

The refreſhment of theſe is a mercy of great value.

15. Multitudes of refreſhments alſo God has provided for our bodies, particularly that of ſleep, of which he has bin ſo conſiderate, as in his diſtributions of time, to make a ſolemn allotment for it: yet who almoſt when he lies down conſiders the mercy, or when he riſes refreſht, riſes thankful alſo? But if our reſt at any time be interrupted by the cares of our mind, or pains of our bodies, then, (and not till then) we conſider, that 'tis *God who gives his beloved ſleep*, Pſal. 127. 2. and think it a bleſſing worth our eſteem. Thus it is with health, ſtrength, and every thing

elſe, we deſpiſe it whilſt we have it, and impatiently deſire it whilſt we have it not: but in the interim ſure we cannot complain, that Gods hand is ſhortned towards us, when in the ordinary courſe of his providence we commonly enjoy theſe mercies many years, which we find ſo much miſs of, if they be withdrawn but for a few hours. And indeed there is not a greater inſtance of human pravity than our ſenſeleſs contemt of bleſſings, merely becauſe they are cuſtomary; which in true reaſon is an argument why we ſhould prize them the more. When we deal with men, we diſcern it well enough: he that gives me once a hundred pounds, I account not ſo much my benefactor, as if he made it my annual revenue: yet God muſt loſe his thanks, by multiplying his favors; and his benefits grow more inviſible by their being alwaies before us.

Our intellectual powers are infinitly more valuable, than thoſe of the body.

16. But the body (with its enjoyments) is but the loweſt inſtance of Gods bounty: 'tis but a decent caſe for that ineſtimable Jewel he has put in it: the ſoul, like the Ark, is the thing for which this whole tabernacle was framed, and that is a ſpark of Divinity in which alone it is that God accompliſhed his deſign of *making man in his own image*, Gen. 1. 26. 'Twould be too long to attemt an exact ſurvey of its particular excellences; the mere intellectual powers wherewith it is indued, have exerciſed the curioſity and raiſed the admiration of the great contemplators of nature in all ages: yet after all, of ſo ſubtile compoſure is the ſoul, that it is inſcrutable even to it ſelf: and tho' the ſimpleſt man knows he has the faculties of Imagination, Apprehenſion, Memory, Reflecting; yet the learnedſt cannot aſſign where they are ſeated, or by what means they operate. 'Tis enough to us that we have them, and many excellent uſes for them; one whereof (and a moſt neceſſary one) is a thankful reflection on the goodneſs of God who gave them. He might have made us in the very loweſt form of creatures, inſenſible as ſtocks or ſtones; or if he had advanc'd us a ſtep higher, he might have fixt us among mere animals, tranſcripts perhaps of the noxious, at the beſt of the tamer ſort of beaſts: but he has plac'd us in the higheſt rank of viſible creatures, and not only given *Dominion over the works of his hands*, Pſal. 8. 6. but has given us the uſe of reaſon wherewith to manage that ſoveraignty, without which we had only bin the more maſterful ſort of brutes.

Yet the ſoul it ſelf is a higher donation.

17. Yet ſtill the ſoul is to be conſider'd in a higher notion, that of its immortality and capacity of endleſs bliſs. And here indeed it owns its extraction, and is an image of the firſt being, whoſe felicity is coexiſtent with himſelf. This as it is the moſt tranſcendent accompliſhment of our nature, ſo it is moſt univerſal. Whatever diſparity there may be between man and man in other reſpects, yet in this all are equal: the poor beggar at the gate has a ſoul as capacious of eternal happineſs, as he whoſe *crumbs* he begs for (nay ſometimes better prepar'd for it, as that parable ſhews, *Luke* 16. 21.) And tho' the dignities of Earth are the prize of the rich and noble, the ſubtle and deſigning; yet Heaven is as eaſily mounted from the dung-hill as the throne, and an honeſt ſimplicity will ſooner bring us thither, than all the Machiavelian policy. Nay God has not only deſign'd us to ſo glorious an end, but has done all on his part to ſecure us of it, ſent his Son to lead us the way, his Spirit to quicken us in it. We need not diſpute how univerſal this is, 'tis ſure it concerns all to whom I am now ſpeaking, thoſe that are within the pale of the Church: and if it ſhould prove only confin'd to them, the more peculiar is their obligation, that are thus ſingled out from the reſt of the world, and the greater ought to be their thankfulneſs. The heathen Philoſopher made it matter of his

ſolemn acknowledgment to fortune, that he was born a Grecian and not a Barbarian: and ſure the advantages of our Chriſtianity are of a much higher ſtrein, and ought to be infinitly more celebrated. The Apoſtle we find often applauding this glorious privilege, as that which makes us *fellow citizens with the Saints, and of the houſhold of God,* Eph. 3. 19. nay which elevates us to a higher ſtate, *the adoption of Sons,* Gal. 4. 5. nor only Sons, but *Heirs alſo of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt,* Rom. 8. 17. And what ambition is there ſo greedy which this will not ſatisfy? yet this is our common ſtate, the birth-right of our generation, if we do not degrade our ſelves, and with *Eſau* baſely ſell our title.

'Tis moſt ungrateful for a ſoul born to immortality to complain.

18. And now methinks every man may interrogate himſelf in the ſame form, wherein *Jonadab* did *Amnon,* 2 Sam. 13. 4. *why art thou, being the Kings ſon, thus lean from day to day*? Why ſhould a Perſon who is adopted by the King of Kings, thus languiſh and pine? What is there below the ſun worthy his notice, much leſs his deſires, that hath a Kingdom above it? Certainly did we but know how to eſtimate our ſelves upon this account, 'twere impoſſible for us with ſuch ſordid condeſcenſions to court every petty worldly intereſt, and ſo impatiently vex our ſelves when we cannot attain it. Alas how unworthily do we bear the name of Chriſtians, when that which carried the Foreſathers of our Faith thro' the moſt fiery trials, cannot ſupport us under the diſappointment of any extravagant deſire? They had ſuch *reſpect to the recompence of the reward,* Heb. 11. 26. as made them chearfully expoſe their fame to ignominy, their Goods to rapine, their Bodies to the moſt exquiſite tortures, and their Lives to death. Yet the ſame hopes cannot work us to any tolerable degree of patience, when we ſuffer but the ſmalleſt diminution in any of theſe. What ſhall we ſay, Is Heaven grown leſs valuable, or Earth more than it was then? No ſurely, but we are more infatuated in our eſtimates: we have ſo long abetted the rivalry of the hand-maid, that the Miſtreſs, like *Sarah,* appears deſpicable. Like *Jonah* we ſit down ſullen upon the withering of a gourd, never conſidering that God has provided us a better ſhelter, *a building of God eternal in the Heavens,* 2 Cor. 5. 1. Indeed there can be no temporal deſtitution ſo great, which ſuch an expectation cannot make ſupportable. Were we in *Job*'s condition ſitting upon a dunghil, and ſcraping our ſelves with a potſheard, yet as long as we can ſay with him, *our Redeemer liveth,* Job 19. 25. we have all reaſon to ſay with him alſo, *bleſſed be the name of the Lord,* Chap. 1. 21. What a madneſs is it then for us to expoſe our ſelves to be pierc'd and wounded by every temporal adverſity, who have ſo impenetrable an armour? Nay what an ungrateful contumely is it to that goodneſs of God, to ſhew that we cannot make him a counterpoiſe to the moſt trivial ſecular ſatisfaction? On which account ſure he may again take up that exprobrating complaint we find in the Prophet, *A goodly price, that I was valued at by them,* Zac. 11. 13.

Eſpecially a ſoul redeem'd.

19. But how mean ſoever he is in our eyes, tho' *Chriſt* ſeem the ſame to us in his glory which he did in his abjection, to have no beauty that we ſhould deſire him; yet he puts another rate upon himſelf, and tells us, *He that loves Father or Mother, Son or Daughter more than me, is not worthy of me,* Matt. 10. 37. Now our love and our joy are paſſions coincident, and therefore whatever we joy more in than we do in him, we may be preſum'd to love better; and if he cannot endure the competition of thoſe more ingenuous objects of our love he here mentions, how will he ſuffer that of our vanities, our childiſh wanton appetites? And yet thoſe are the things after which we ſo impatiently rave. For I believe I may truly

affirm, that if there were a ſcrutiny made into all the diſcontents of mankind, for one that were faſtned upon any great conſiderable calamity, there are many that are founded only in the irregularity of our own deſires.

Nothing but want of application of mind, could occaſion our complaints.

20. By what has bin ſaid we may juſtly conclude in the Prophets phraſe, *God hath not bin to us a wilderneſs, a land of darkneſs*, Jer. 2. 31. but has graciouſly diſpenc'd to us in all our intereſts. Yet the inſtances here given are only common, ſuch as relate to all, or at leaſt the far greater part of mankind: but what volumes might be made, ſhould every man ſet down his own particular experiences of mercy? In that caſe 'twould be no extravagant Hyperbole we find Joh.22.25. *That even the world it ſelf could not contain the books which ſhould be written.* God knows our memories are very frail, and our obſervations ſlight in this point: yet abſtracting from all the forgotten or neglected favors, what vaſt catalogues may every man make to himſelf, if he would but yet recollect, what effects he has had of Gods bounty in giving, of his providence in protecting, of his grace in reſtraining and exciting, of his patience in forbearing? And certainly all theſe productions of the divine goodneſs were never deſign'd to die in the birth. The Pſalmiſt will tell us, *the Lord hath ſo done his marvellous works, that they ought to be had in remembrance*, Pſ.111.4. Let every man then make it his daily care to recount to himſelf the wonders God hath done, as for the children of men in general, ſo for himſelf in particular. When the *Iſraelites* murmured under their bondage, *Pharoah* imputes it to their idleneſs, and preſcribes them more work, as the readieſt cure: a piece indeed of inhuman Tyranny in him, but may with equity and ſucceſs be practiced by us upon our ſelves. When we find our appetites mutinous, complaining of our preſent condition, let us ſet our ſelves to work, impoſe it as a task upon our ſelves to recollect the many inſtances of Gods mercies. And ſurely if we do it ſincerely, and with intention, we cannot have paſt thro' half our ſtages, before our ſullen murmurs will be beat out of countenance, and retire with ſhame, when they are confronted with ſuch a cloud of witneſſes, ſuch ſignal teſtimonies of Gods goodneſs unto us: for when we have muſter'd up all our little grievances, moſt critically examin'd all our wants, we ſhall find them very unproportionable to our comforts, and to our receits; in which comparative notion, the next Section is to conſider them.

SECT. IV.

Of the Surpluſage of our Enjoyments above our Sufferings.

Our poſſeſſions may be eſtimated by their number, weight or continuance.

1. TO regulate our eſtimate of thoſe things which we either enjoy or ſuffer, there are three precedent queries to be made: the firſt of their number or plenty, the ſecond of their weight, the third of their conſtancy and continuance; for according as they partake more of theſe properties, every good is more good, and every evil is more evil. It will therefore be our beſt method of trial in the preſent caſe, to compare our bleſſings and our calamities in theſe three reſpects.

Our bleſſings are in number infinite.

2. And firſt in that of plenty. The mercies of God are the ſource of all our good, are ſet out to us in holy Scripture in the moſt *ſuperlative* ſtrein, they are *multitudes*, Pſ.102.20. *Plenteous redemption*, Pſ.130.7. *as high as the heaven*, Pſ.103.11. *He fills all things living with plenteouſneſs*, Pſ.145.16. His mercies indeed are ſuch as come not within the compaſs of number,

but ſtretch themſelves to infinity, and are beſt repreſented by ſuch a calculation as God made to *Abraham*, when he ſhew'd the numerouſneſs of his poſterity by the innumerableneſs of the ſtars, *Gen.* 15. 5. Were there but a ſingle mercy apportion'd to each minute of our lives, the ſum would ariſe very high: but how is our Arithmetic confounded, when every minute has more than we can diſtinctly number? For beſides the original ſtock mention'd in the laſt Section, and the acceſſion of new bounty, the giving us ſomewhat which we had not before; what an accumulative mercy is it, the preſerving what we have? We are made up of ſo many pieces, have ſuch varieties of intereſts, ſpiritual, temporal, public, and private; for our ſelves, for our friends, and dependents; that it is not a confuſed general regard that will keep all in ſecurity one moment. We are like a vaſt building, which coſts as much to maintain, as to erect. And indeed conſidering the corruptibleneſs of our materials, our preſervation is no leſs a work of Omnipotence, than our firſt forming: nay perhaps 'tis rather a greater. Our original clay tho' it had no aptneſs, yet it had no averſions to the receiving a human form; but was in the hand of the potter to make it what he pleaſed: but we now have principles of decay within us, which vehemently tend to diſſolution; we want the ſupplies of ſeveral things without us, the failing whereof returns us again to our duſt. Nay we do not only need the aid, but we fear the hoſtility of outward things. That very air which ſometimes refreſhes us, may at another ſtarve and freeze us: that which warms and comforts us, has alſo a power of conſuming us. Yea that very meat which nouriſhes, may choak and ſtifle us. In a word there is no creature ſo deſpicable, ſo inconſiderable, which may not ſometimes ſerve us, and which may not at any time (if God permit) ruine us. Now whence is it that we ſo conſtantly, ſo frequently find the good, the benign efficacy of theſe things, and ſo ſeldom, ſo rarely the evil? Whence I ſay is it, but from the active unwearied providence, which draws forth the better properties of the creatures for our uſe, and reſtrains the worſer for our ſecurity? which with a particular advertence watches not only over every Perſon, but over every ſeveral concern of that Perſon. And how aſtoniſhing a contemplation is this? If the mere ebbing and flowing of the ſea, put the Philoſopher into ſuch an extaſy, that he flung himſelf into it, becauſe he could not comprehend the inſcrutable cauſe of it; in what perpetual raptures of admiration may we be, who have every minute within us, and about us, more and greater wonders, and thoſe too in our favor, when we deſerve rather the Divine power ſhould exert it ſelf in our deſtruction?

Our miſadventures much fewer.

3. But alas our danger from the viſible creatures is little, compar'd with thoſe from the ſpirits of darkneſs. *We wreſtle not only with fleſh and blood, but with Principalities and Powers, with ſpiritual wickedneſs*, &c. Eph. 6. 12. So inveterate is the enmity between the *Serpent* and the *ſeed* of the *Woman* in general, that he watches all advantages againſt us, not only in our ſouls, but even our bodies, our goods, and in every part of our concerns. Thus we ſee he not only aſſaulted *Job*'s ſoul by the wicked inſinuations of his Wife, but (with more effect) his body with boiles and ſores, his poſſeſſions by the *Caldeans* and *Sabeans*, and the images of himſelf, his deareſt Children, by a wind from the wilderneſs, Job 1. And can we think his malice is now worn out? No ſurely he ſtill wiſhes as ill to mankind as ever, and we ſhould ſoon ſee the woful effects of it, did not the ſame power which let him looſe for *Job*'s trial, reſtrain him for our ſafety. Nay had he but power to affright, tho' not to hurt us, even that would make

our life very uncomfortable. We cannot hear the relation of Sprights or Apparitions, but our blood chills upon it, and a horror runs thro' our veins: what ſhould we then do if he ſhould make his night-walks thro' our chambers, and with his illuſory terrors diſturb our reſt? Yet all this and much more he would do, if God did not chain up this *old Dragon*, Rev. 20. Nay if he were not at the expence of a guard about us, and thoſe no leſs than Angels. I ſhall not diſpute whether every perſon hath not his peculiar Guardian: for tho' many have not improbably aſſerted it, we have ground enough of acquieſcence in the general affirmation of the Apoſtle, *that they are all miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them, who ſhall be heirs of Salvation*, Heb. 1. 4. And now if the Reader pleaſe to ſum up how many are his concerns, and how many are the dangers which await him in them all, he cannot ſure render the account of thoſe mercies which preſerve the one, and divert the other, in any other phraſe than that of the Pſalmiſt, *They are more than I am able to expreſs*, Pſal. 40. 7.

The querulous cannot produce ſo many cauſes of complaint as they may of thankſgivings.

4. We may now challenge the moſt miſerable, or the moſt querulous man living, to produce cauſes of complaint, proportionable to thoſe of thankſgiving. He that has the greateſt ſtock of calamities, can never vye with the heaps of benefits; the diſproportion is greater than that of the armies of *Ahab* and *Benhadad*, 1 Kin. 20. 27. whereof the one was like *two little flocks of Kids, the other filled the country*. God has told us that *he afflicts not willingly, nor grieves the children of men*, Lam. 3. 33. whereas on the contrary, he *delighted in mercy*, Mich. 7. 18. We may judge by our ſelves which he is the likelieſt often to repete, thoſe acts which he doth with regret and reluctancy, or thoſe which he do's with pleſure and delight. But we need no inferences where we have the atteſtation of experience. Let every man therefore make this his judge in the caſe, let him every night recollect, how many things within and about him he is concern'd in, and conſider how many of thoſe have bin preſerv'd entire to him, ſtill accounting every thing ſo continued as a new donation. If he begin with his Spiritual ſtate, 'tis too poſſible he may ſometimes find he has loſt his Innocence, committed ſome, perhaps many ſins: but even in theſe he will find cauſe to juſtify God, if he do but recollect with what inward checks and admonitions, and outward reſtraints, God has endevour'd to bridle him. If he will break thro' thoſe fences, that do's not at all derogate from the mercy of God which ſo guarded him, but it rather illuſtrates his goodneſs, that after ſo many quenchings of his Spirit, do's yet continue its influence. So that even he that has the moſt deplorably violated his integrity, is yet to confeſs that Gods purpoſe was to have preſerv'd it entire: and he might really ſo have kept it, had he comply'd with thoſe aids which were afforded him. But in temporal concerns we are not ſo apt to undermine our ſelves, and therefore ſhall more rarely find we have ſuffer'd detriment in them, than in our ſpiritual; but are there ordinarily like to meet with a better account. Let a man therefore conſider what is lacking to him of all the ſecular good things he had in the morning, and tell me whether for the moſt part he may not give ſuch an account, as the *Iſraelitiſh* officers did of their men after the ſlaughter of *Midianites, that he had not loſt one*, Num. 31. 30. Or if ſometimes he do ſuffer a diminution, yet at the worſt he will find that many more good things have bin preſerv'd to him, than have bin taken from him. A man may perhaps meet with ſome damage in his eſtate, yet 'tis manifold odds that that damage is but partial, and that he has ſtill more left than is loſt. Or if it be more entire; yet if he have his health, his limbs, his ſenſes, his

friends, and all things beſide his eſtate left him, ſo that for one thing he has loſt, he ſtill retains a multitude, he may ſay of it as the Diſciples of the few Loaves, *What is this among ſo many*? Mat. 14. 17. *Ariſtippus* being bemoan'd for the loſs of a Farm, replied with ſome ſharpneſs upon his Condoler, You have but one field, and I have yet three left, why ſhould I not rather grieve for you? intimating that a man is not ſo much to eſtimate what he has loſt, as what he has left. A piece of wiſdom which if we would tranſcribe we might quickly convince our ſelves, that even in our moſt adverſe eſtate there are as *Elijah* ſpeaks, *more with us than againſt us*, 2 Kin. *6. 16.* that our enjoyments are more than our ſufferings, and Gods acts of grace, do far out-number thoſe of his ſeverity.

Our bleſſings are weighty as well as numerous.

5. And as they do out-number, ſo alſo do they out-weigh them. The mercies we receive from God are (as the laſt Section has ſhew'd) of the greateſt importance; the moſt ſubſtantial ſolid goods, and the greateſt of all, I mean thoſe which concern our eternal ſtate, are ſo firmly fixt on us, that unleſs we will voluntarily quit our claim, 'tis not in the power of men or devils to defeat us. Light bodies are eaſily blown away by every guſt of wind, but this *weight of glory*, as the Apoſtle calls it, 2 Cor. 4. 17. continues firm and ſtable, is proof againſt all ſtorms, like the *ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land*, Iſa. 32. 2. Thoſe dark adumbrations we have of it, might have ſerved to refreſh and deceive the tediouſneſs of our pilgrimage, and therefore the moſt formidable calamities of this life are below all meſures of compariſon with this hope of our calling, the *riches of the glory of our inheritance*, Eph. 3. 16. The heavieſt and moſt preſſing of our afflictions are to that, *but like the ſmall duſt of the ballance*, Eſa. 40. 15. ſo that if we ſhould here ſtop our inquiſition, we have a ſufficient reſolution of the preſent queſtion, and muſt conclude that God has given us an abundant counterpoiſe of all, we either do or can ſuffer here.

The denial of temporal good things is a proof of an intereſt in ſpiritual: and even the moſt calamitous have many great bleſſings.

6. If therefore there be any ſo forlorn as to temporals, that he can fetch thence no evidence of Gods fatherly care of him, yet this one conſideration may ſolve his doubts, and convince him that he is not abdicated by him. We read of no *gifts Abraham* gave *Iſaac*, yet to the ſons of the concubines 'tis ſaid he did, Gen. 25. *6*. It had bin a very fallacious inference, if *Iſaac* ſhould have concluded himſelf neglected, becauſe his far greater portion was but in reverſions. And it will be the ſame in any of us, if we argue an unkindneſs from any temporal wants who have the entail of an eternal inheritance. But ſurely *God do's not leave himſelf without a witneſs*, Act. 14. 17. even in ſecular things; there is no man breathing but has ſome bleſſings of his left hand, as well as his right, as I have already mention'd: and unleſs it be ſome few prodigies of Calamity in whoſe puniſhment or patience God deſigns ſignally to glorify himſelf, there are none who enjoy not greater comforts of life than thoſe they want, I mean ſuch as are really greater, tho' perhaps, to their prejudicated fancies they do not appear ſo. Thus in point of health, if a man be diſaffected in one part, yet all the reſt of his body may be (and often is) well; or if he have a complication, and have more than one diſeaſe, yet there is no man that has all, or half ſo many as are incident to human bodies; ſo that he is comparatively more healthy than ſick. So again it is not very common for a man to loſe a limb, or ſenſe, the generality of men keep them to their laſt; and they who do, have in that an over-balance to moſt outward adverſities; and even they who are ſo unhappy to loſe one, yet commonly keep the reſt; at leaſt the major part: or if at any time any

man is left a mere breathing trunk, yet it is by ſuch ſtupifying diſeaſes as dead the ſenſe, or ſuch mortal ones as ſoon take them away; and ſo the remedy overtakes the Malady. Beſides it pleaſes God very often, to make compenſation for the want of one member or faculty by improving the uſe of another. We have ſeen feet ſupply all the neceſſary uſes of hands to thoſe who have had none; and it is a thing of daily obſervation that men that are blind, have the greater internal light: have their intellects more vigorous and active, by their abſtractions from viſible objects.

The poor man has more real pleaſures than the rich.

7. Thus alſo it is in the matter of wealth, he that is forc'd to get his bread by the ſweat of his brows, 'tis true he cannot have thoſe delicacies wherewith rich men abound; yet his labor helps him to a more poignant, a more ſavory ſauce than a whole College of Epicures can compound. His hunger gives a higher guſt to his dry cruſt, than the ſurfeited ſtomach can find in the moſt coſtly, moſt elaborate mixtures: ſo verifying the obſervation of *Solomon*, *the full ſoul loatheth the hony comb, but to the hungry ſoul every bitter thing is ſweet*, Prov.27.7. He cannot *indeed ſtretch himſelf upon his bed of Ivory*, Am.6.4. yet his ſleeps are ſounder than thoſe that can. The wiſe man tells us, and experience do's ſo too, that *the ſleep of a labouring man is ſweet*, Eccleſ.5.12. He is not clothed gorgeouſly, has not the ſplendor of glittering apparel, ſo neither has he the care of contriving it, the fears of being foreſtall'd in a new invention, or any of thoſe unmanly ſolicitudes which attend that vanity. He has the proper genuine uſe of clothing; the preventing ſhame and cold, and is happily determin'd to that which the wiſer men of the world have voluntarily choſen. To conclude he has one advantage beyond all theſe; his neceſſities reſcue him from idleneſs, and all its conſequent temptations; which is ſo great a benefit, that if rich men be not their own taskmaſters as his wants are his, if they do not provide themſelves of buſineſs; that one want of theirs is infinitly more deplorable than all his: and he is not only happy comparatively with himſelf, in having better things than he wants, but with them alſo.

Privacy is more deſirable than eminence.

8. If we come now to reputation and fame, the account will be much the ſame. He that is eminent in the world for ſome great atchievement, is ſet up as an object of every mans remark; when as his excellences on the one hand are viſible, ſo his faults and blemiſhes are on the other. And as human frailty makes it too probable theſe latter will be really more, ſo human envy makes it ſure that they ſhall be more preciſely, more curiouſly obſerv'd, and more loudly blazon'd. So that upon the whole, a good quiet ſecurity, tho' it be not the road to glory, yet it is the likelieſt fence againſt infamy. And indeed he that can keep up the repute of a ſober integrity within his own private ſphere, need not envy the triumphant ſallies of others, which often meet with a fatal turn at the latter end of the day. But 'twill be ſaid that even that more moderate ſort of reputation is not every mans portion, but that many lie under great ignominy and ſcandals. I ſhall here ask whether thoſe be juſt or unjuſt: if they be juſt they belong not to our preſent ſubject, which relates only to thoſe inflictions which are the effects of Gods immediate providence, not of our own crimes; for I never doubted but that by thoſe we may diveſt our ſelves of any, nay of all the good things God has deſign'd us. But if the obloquy be unjuſt, 'tis probable that 'tis taken up only by ill men, and that the good paſs a more equitable ſentence; and then ſurely the atteſtation of a few ſuch, is able to outweigh a multitude of the others. And in this caſe a man may not only find patience but pleſure in reproches. *Socrates* lookt with trouble and jealouſy on himſelf when ill men commended him, ſaying

what ill have I done? and ſure a Chriſtian has a farther reaſon to be pleaſed with their revilings, they being his ſecurity againſt the *woe* pronounc'd to thoſe *whom all men ſpeak well of*, Luke 6. 26. But ſometimes it happens, that even good men are ſeduc'd, and either by the artifices of the wicked, or their own too haſty credulity, give credit to unjuſt reports. And this I confeſs is a ſharp trial to the injur'd perſon, yet even this cannot often be univerſal; there can ſcarce be any innocence ſo forlorn but that there may be opportunities of clearing it to ſome or other, and by them propagating it to more, and if the cloud ever come to be diſpers'd, their fame will appear with the brighter luſter. But if none of this happen, they have yet a certain and more bleſſed retreat, even an appeal to the unerring Judge, who never beholds us with more approbation, than when we are under the unjuſt condemnation of men. Indeed we have then a double tie upon him, not only his Juſtice, but his Pity is concern'd in our cauſe. God particularly owns himſelf as the refuge of the oppreſſed, and there is ſcarce a ſharper and more ſenſible oppreſſion than this of Calumny: yet even this proves advantage, whilſt it procures God's immediate patronage, makes us the objects of his more peculiar care and compaſſion, who can *make our righteouſneſs as clear as the light*, Pſalm 37. 6. if he ſee it fit; but if in his wiſdom he chuſe not that for us, 'tis comfort enough for us that we have approv'd it to him. 'Twas *Elkanah*'s queſtion to *Hannah* in her diſconſolation, *Am I not better to thee than ten Sons*? 1 Sam. 1. 8. And ſure we may ſay the like of God's approbation, that 'tis better to us, I ſay not than ten, but ten thouſand Eulogies of men. The very Eccho of it in the teſtimony of a good conſcience is an unſpeakable comfort, and this voice ſounds more audibly, more ſweetly among the loudeſt, the harſheſt accuſations of men. So that we ſee even this aſſault too is not without its guard, and theſe *waters of Marah*, Exod. 15. 23. may be rendred not only wholſome, but pleaſant.

Miſadventures in point of friendſhip are counterbalanced.

9. I have now inſtanced in the three moſt general concerns of human life, the Body, Goods, and Fame, to which heads may be reduced moſt of the afflictions incident to our outward ſtate, as far as immediatly concerns our ſelves. But there is no man ſtands ſo ſingle in the world, but he has ſome relations or friends in which he thinks himſelf intereſſed, and many times thoſe oblique ſtrokes which wound us thro' them, are as painful as the moſt direct: yet here alſo God is ordinarily pleaſed to provide ſome allaies, if we would but take notice of them. He who has had one friend die, has ordinarily divers others ſurviving; or if he have not that, uſually God raiſes him up others. 'Tis true we cannot have a ſucceſſion of Fathers or Mothers, yet we often have of other friends that are no leſs helpful to us: and indeed there are ſcarce in any thing more remarkable evidences of Providence, than in this particular. *He that is able out of ſtones to raiſe up children to Abraham*, Matt. 3. 9. do's many times by as unexpected a production ſupply friends to the deſolate. But we do ſometimes loſe our friends while they are living, they withdraw their kindneſs which is the ſoul of friendſhip: and if this happen by our own demerit, we can accuſe neither God nor them for it: nor can we rationally expect that God ſhould provide ſupplies, when we wilfully deſpoil our ſelves. But when they are unkind without provocation, then is the ſeaſon for his interpoſition, who uſes to take up *thoſe whom Father and Mother forſake*, Pſalm 27. 10. and we frequently ſee ſignal proofs of his care in exciting the compaſſions of other friends and relatives, or perhaps of mere ſtrangers. Nay ſometimes God makes the inhumanity of a man's

relations, the occaſion of his advantage. Thus the barbarous malice of *Joſeph*'s brethren was the firſt ſtep to his Dominion over *Egypt*. And it is a common obſervation in Families, that the moſt diſcountenanc'd child oft makes better proof, than the dearling.

Whatſoever calamities they ſuſtain they have the ſame before-recited alleviations with our own.

10. We are yet liable to a third affliction by the calamity of our friends, which by the Sympathy of Kindneſs preſſes us no leſs (perhaps more) ſenſibly than our own: but then 'tis to be conſider'd that theirs are capable of the ſame allaying circumſtances that ours are, and God has the ſame arts of alleviating their burdens; ſo that we have the ſame arguments for acquieſcence in their ſufferings that we have in our own, and ſhall do a more friendly office in impreſſing thoſe upon them, than in the moſt paſſionate adopting their ſorrows.

Even the ſin of a Relative is not void of all comfort.

11. The laſt and greateſt diſcomfort from friends, is that of their ſin: and if ever we may be allow'd that diſconſolate ſtrein of the Prophet, Eſa. 22. 4. *Turn away from me, I will weep bitterly, labor not to comfort me*; this ſeems to be the time. Yet even this *valley of Achor is not without a door of hope*, Hoſ. 22. 15. A vicious perſon may be recalled, multitudes have bin; ſo that as long as God continues life, we ought no more to depoſite our hope than to quit our endevor. Beſides there are few that make this complaint that have not ſomthing to balance, or at leaſt to lighten it. I ſhall inſtance in that relation which is the neareſt and moſt tender, that of a Parent. He that has one bad child, may have divers good. If he have but one vertuous 'tis a very great mercy, and 'tis another that he may be the better taught to value it by the oppoſition of the contrary. But if any be ſo unhappy as to have many children, and *all to conſume his eyes and grieve his heart*, 1 Sam. 2. 33. it may be a ſeaſonable reflection for him to examine how far he has contributed to it, either by *Ely*'s fond indulgence, or by a remiſs and careleſs education: or which is worſt of all, by his own impious example. If any, or all of theſe be found the cauſe, he is not ſo much to ſeek for allaies to his grief, as for pardon of his ſin: and when he has penitently retracted his own faults, he may then have better ground of hope that God may reform thoſe of his children. In the mean time he may look on his own affliction in them as God's diſcipline on him, and gather at leaſt this comfort from it, that his heavenly Father has more care of him, than he had of his; and does not leave him uncorrected.

As in the greater world there grow ſpecifics for the maladies of every clime; ſo it is in the leſſer.

12. Thus we ſee in all the concerns (which are the moſt common and important of human life, and wherein the juſteſt of our complaints are uſually founded) there is ſuch a temperature and mixture, that the good do's more than equal the ill; and that not only in the groſſer bulk, when our whole ſtate is weighed together, but in every ſingle branch of it: God having herein dealt with this little world Man, as he has done with the greater, wherein he is obſerv'd to have furniſhed every country with Specific remedies for their peculiar diſeaſes. I have only given theſe ſhort hints by way of eſſay and pattern for the Readers contemplation, which when he ſhall have extended to all thoſe more minute particulars wherein he is eſpecially concern'd, more curiouſly compar'd his ſufferings with his allaies and comforts; I cannot doubt but he will own himſelf an inſtance of the truth of the preſent Theſis, and confeſs, that he has much more cauſe of thankfulneſs than complaint.

They who have no croſſes of God's impoſing, create a multitude to themſelves.

13. This I ſay ſuppoſing his afflictions to be of thoſe more ſolid and conſiderable ſorts I have before mention'd. But how many are there who have few or none of ſuch, who ſeem to be ſeated in the land of

Goſhen, in a place exemt from all the plagues that infeſt their neighbors ; And thoſe one would think ſhould give a ready ſuffrage to this concluſion, as having no temtation to oppugn it ; yet I doubt 'tis far otherwiſe, and that ſuch men are of all the moſt unſatisfied. For tho' they have no croſſes of Gods impoſing, they uſually create a multitude to themſelves. And here we may ſay with *David, it is better to fall into the hand of God, than into the hand of man*, 2 Sam. 24. 14. 'tis eaſier to bear the afflictions God ſends, than thoſe we make to our ſelves. His are limited both for quantity and quality, but our own are as boundleſs as thoſe extravagant deſires from which they ſpring.

Thoſe diſcontents which are moſt cauſeleſs are moſt importunate.

14. And this is the true cauſe why contentment is ſo much a ſtranger to thoſe who have all the outward cauſes of it. They have no definite meſure of their deſires: 'tis not the ſupply of all their real wants will ſerve their turn: their appetites are precarious and depend upon contingences. They hunger not becauſe they are emty, but becauſe others are full. Many a man would have liked his own portion well enough, had he not ſeen another have ſomething he liked better. Nay even the moſt inconſiderable things acquire a value by being anothers, when we deſpiſe much greater of our own. *Ahab* might well have ſatisfied himſelf with the kingdom of *Iſrael*, had not *Naboths* poor plot lain in his eye: but ſo raving were his deſires after it, that he diſreliſhes all the pomps of a Crown, yea the ordinary refreſhments of Nature, *can eat no bread* till he hath that to furniſh him with Sallads, 1 *Kings* 21. 2. And how many are there now adaies whoſe cloths fit uneaſy if they ſee another have had but the luck to be a little more ingeniouſly vain; whoſe meat is unſavory if they have ſeen but a greater rarity, a newer cookery at anothers Table: in a word who make other peoples exceſſes the ſtandard of their own felicities.

As our appetites are excited by outward objects; ſo they are hurried on by inward luſts.

15. Nor are our appetites only excited thus by our outward objects, but precipitated and hurried on by our inward luſts. The proud man ſo longs for homage and adoration, that nothing can pleaſe him if that be wanting. *Haman* can find no guſt in all the ſenſualities of the *Perſian* Court, becauſe a poor deſpicable Jew denies his obeiſance, *Eſt.* 5. 13. The luſtful ſo impatiently purſues his impure deſigns, that any difficulty he meets in them, makes him pine and languiſh like *Amnon*, who could no way recover his own health but by violating his ſiſters honor, 2 *Sam.* 13. 14. The revengeful labors under an Hydropic thirſt till he have the blood of his enemy: all the liquor of *Abſoloms* ſheep-ſheering could not quench his, without the ſlaughter of his brother, 2 *Sam.* 13. 22. And thus every one of our paſſions keeps us upon the rack till they have obtained their deſigns. Nay when they have, the very emtineſs of thoſe acquiſitions is a new torment, and put us upon freſh purſuits. Thus between the impetuouſneſs of our deſires, and the emtineſs of our enjoyments, we ſtill *diſquiet our ſelves in vain*, Pſal. 39. 7. And whilſt we have ſuch cruel task-maſters 'tis not ſtrange to find us groaning under our burdens. If we will indulge to all our vicious or fooliſh appetites, think our lives bound up with them, and ſollicite the ſatisfaction of them with as impatient a vehemence, as *Rachel* did for children, Gen. 30. 1. *give me them or I die*: no wonder that we are alwaies complaining of diſappointments, ſince in theſe the very ſucceſs is a defeat, and is but the exchanging the pain of a craving ravenous ſtomach, for that of a cloi'd and nauſeated. Indeed men of this temper condemn themſelves to a perpetual reſtleſsneſs: they are like phantaſtic mutineers, who when their ſuperiors ſend them blanks to write their

own conditions, know not what will pleaſe them: and even Omnipotence it ſelf cannot ſatisfy theſe till it have new moulded them, and reduced their deſires to a certainty.

A great cauſe of our diſcontent, is the enjoyment of what we deſire.

16. But in the mean time how unjuſtly do they accuſe God of illiberality, becauſe every thing anſwers not their humor? He has made them reaſonable creatures, and has provided them ſatisfactions proportionable to their nature; but if they will have wild irrational expectations, neither his wiſdom, nor his goodneſs is concern'd to ſatisfy thoſe. His ſupplies are real and ſolid, and therefore have no correſpondence to imaginary wants. If we will create ſuch to our ſelves, why do we not create an imaginary ſatisfaction to them? 'Twere the merrier frenzy of the two, to be like the mad *Athenian* that thought all the ſhips that came into his harbor his own; and 'twere better *Ixion* like to have our Arms fill'd with a cloud, than to have them perpetually beating our own breaſts, and be ſtill tormenting our ſelves with unſatisfiable deſires. Yet this is the ſtate to which men voluntarily ſubject themſelves, and then quarrel at God becauſe they will not let themſelves be happy. But ſure their very complaints juſtify God, and argue that he has dealt very kindly with them, and afforded them all the neceſſary accommodations of life: for did they want them, they would not be ſo ſenſible of the want of the other. He that is at perfect eaſe may feel with ſome vexation the biting of a flea or gnat, which would not be at all obſervable if he were upon the rack. And ſhould God change the ſcene, and make theſe nice people feel the deſtitution of neceſſaries: all theſe regrets about ſuperfluities would be overwhelmed. In the mean time how deplorable a thing is it, that we are ſtill the poorer for Gods bounty, that thoſe to whom he has opened his hand wideſt, ſhould open their mouth ſo too, in out-cries and murmurs? For I think I may ſay that generally, thoſe that are the fartheſt remov'd from want, are ſo from content too; they take no notice of all the real ſubſtantial bleſſings they enjoy, leave theſe (like the ninty nine ſheep in the wilderneſs) forgotten and neglected, to go in queſt after ſome fugitive ſatisfaction, which like a ſhadow flies ſtill faſter in proportion to their purſuit.

We ought to be gratefull for what we have receiv'd before we repine for want of more.

17. And now would God they could be recalled from this unprofitable chaſe, and inſtead of the Horſleeches note, *Give, give*, Prov. 30. 15. take up that of the Pſalmiſt, *what ſhall I render to the Lord for all the benefits he hath done unto me*? Pſ. 116. 12. Let them count how many valuable or rather ineſtimable things, they have received from his mercy, and then confront them with thoſe corrections they have found from his juſtice; and if they do this impartially, I doubt not they will find wherewithall to check their higheſt mutinies; and will joyn with me in confeſſing, that their good things abundantly outweigh their ill.

The duration of mercies ſurpaſſes that of judgments.

18. If now we carry on the compariſon to the laſt circumſtance, and conſider the Conſtancy, we ſhall find as wide a difference. Let us take the Pſalmiſts teſtimony, and there will appear a very diſtant date of his mercies and puniſhments. *His mercies endure for ever*, Pſ. 136. whereas his wrath *endures but the twinkling of an eie*, Pſ. 30. 5. And accordingly God owns his acts of ſeverity as his *ſtrange work*, Iſa. 28. 21. that which he reſorts to only upon ſpecial emergencies; but his mercies *are renewed every morning*, Lam. 3. 25. and doubtleſs we may all upon trial affirm the ſame. There are many of the moſt neceſſary comforts of life which do not only ſomtimes viſit us as gueſts, but dwell with us as inmates and domeſtics. How many are there who have lived in a perpetual affluence from their cradles to their graves, have never known what it is to want? And tho' the goods

of fortune are perhaps leſs conſtant to ſome, yet the refreſhments of nature are uſually ſo to us all. We eat and drink, we ſleep, we recreate, we converſe in a continued circle, and go our round almoſt as conſtantly as the Sun do's his. Or if God do's ſometimes a little interrupt us in it, put ſome ſhort reſtraint upon our refreſhments, yet that comparatively to the time we enjoy them, is but proportionable to the ſtop he has ſomtimes made of the Sun, *Joſh.* 10. 13. 2 *Kings* 20. 11. or of the ſea, *Exod.* 14. 21. which as they were no ſubverſions of the courſe of nature, ſo neither are thoſe ſhort pauſes he ſomtimes makes, a repeal of thoſe fixt and cuſtomary benefits his providence uſually allots us. But who is there can ſay that any one of his afflictions has bin of equal continuance, or has preſt him with ſo few intermiſſions? Perhaps he may have miſt ſome few nights ſleep: but what is that to a twelve-months, or perhaps a whole lives enjoying it? 'Tis poſſible his ſtomach and his meat have not alwaies bin ready together; but how much oftner have they met to his delight? and generally thoſe things that are moſt uſeful, are but rarely interrupted. Nay to a great many even the delicacies of life are no leſs conſtant, and their luxuries are as quotidian as their bread: whereas unleſs their vices or their fancies create uneaſineſſes to them, thoſe that come immediatly from God's hand, make long intermiſſions and ſhort ſtaies. Yet for all this they that ſhould meaſure by the unceſſantneſs of mens complaints, would judge that the ſcene was quite reverſt, and that our good things are as *Job* ſpeaks, *ſwifter than a weavers ſhuttle*, Job. 7. 6. whilſt our ills, like *Gehazies Leproſy, cleave inſeparably to us*, 2 Kings 5. 10.

When calamities are paſt, we keep them in fiction, like aguiſh patients count our ſelves ſick on our well-day.

19. The truth is, we will not let our ſelves enjoy thoſe intervals God allowes us, but when a calamity do's retire we will ſtill keep it in fiction and imagination; revolve it in our minds, and becauſe 'tis poſſible it may return, look upon it as not gone. Like aguiſh patients we count our ſelves ſick on our well-day, becauſe we expect a fit the next. A ſtrange ſtupid folly thus to court vexation, and be miſerable in Chimera. Do's any man, or indeed any beaſt deſire to keep a diſtaſtful reliſh ſtill in his mouth, to chew the cud upon gall and wormwood? Yet certainly there are a multitude of people whoſe lives are imbitter'd to them meerly by theſe fantaſtic imaginary ſufferings. Nor do we only fright our ſelves with images and Ideas of paſt calamities, but we dreſs up new bugbears and mormoes, are Poetic and aerial in our inventions, and lay Romantic ſcenes of diſtreſſes. This is a thing very incident to jealous natures, who are alwaies raiſing alarms to themſelves. A ſuſpicious man looks on every body with dread. One man he fears has deſigns upon his fortune, another on his reputation, perhaps a third upon his life: whilſt in the mean time, the only ill deſign againſt him is managed by himſelf; his own cauſeleſs fears and jealouſies, which put him in a ſtate of hoſtility with all the world, and do often betray him to the very things he groundleſly ſuſpected. For it is not ſeldom ſeen that men have incur'd real miſchiefs by a fond ſollicitude of avoiding imaginary ones. I do not queſtion but this is a ſtate calamitous enough, and ſhall acknowledge it very likely that ſuch perſons ſhall have little or no truce from their troubles, who have ſuch an unexhauſted ſpring within themſelves; yet we may ſay to them as the Prophet did to the houſe of *Jacob*, *Is the ſpirit of the Lord ſtraitned? are theſe his doings?* Micha 2. 7. Such men muſt not cry out that God's hand lies heavy upon them, but their own; and ſo can be no impeachment to the truth of our obſervations, that God's bleſſings are of a longer duration, keep a more fixt, ſteddy courſe

than his puniſhments. The reſult of all is, that the generality of mankind have good things (even as to temporals) which do in the three reſpects forementiond exceed the ill. I mean the true and real things which God ſends, tho' not thoſe fanciful ones they raiſe to themſelves.

'Tis equally imprudent and unjuſt to entertain our ſelves with the unpleaſant part of Gods diſpenſations.

20. And now why ſhould it not appear a reaſonable propoſition that men ſhould entertain themſelves with the pleſanter parts of Gods diſpenſations to them, and not alwaies pore upon the harſher: eſpecially ſince the former are ſo much a fairer object, and perpetually in their eie, why ſhould we look on the more ſadning ſpectacles of human frailty or miſfortune, thro' all the magnifying optics our fancies can ſupply, and perverſly turn away our eies from the chearfuller? Yet this God knows is too much the caſe with moſt of us. How nicely and critically do we obſerve every little adverſe accident of our lives? What tragical ſtories of them do our memories preſent us with? When alas a whole current of proſperity glides by without our notice. Like little children our fingers are never off the ſore place, till we have pickt every little ſcratch into an Ulcer. Nay like the leuder ſort of beggars, we make artificial ſores to give us a pretence of complaint. And can we then expect God ſhould concern himſelf in the cure? Indeed in the courſe of his ordinary providence there is no cure for ſuch people, unleſs it be by revulſion, the making them feel the ſmart of ſome very great and preſſing affliction. They therefore put themſelves under an unhappy dilemma, either to continue their own tormentors, or to endure the ſevereſt courſe of Gods diſcipline. 'Tis true the laſt is the more eligible; but I am ſure the beſt way is to prevent both, by a juſt and grateful ſenſe of Gods mercies: which will be yet farther illuſtrated if we compare them with our own demerits.

SECT. V.

Of our Demerit towards God.

Our dealing with God is contrary to all methods of commerce with men.

1. IT is the common fault of our nature, that we are very apt to be partial to our ſelves; and to ſquare our expectations more by what we wiſh, than by what we deſire. Something of this is viſible in our dealings with men. We oft *look to reap where we have not ſown*, Matt. 25.25. expect benefits where we do none; yet in civil tranſactions there are ſtill remaining ſuch footſteps of natural juſtice, that we are not univerſally ſo unreaſonable: All traffic and commerce ſubſiſting upon the principle of equal retribution, giving one good thing for another equivalent; ſo that no man expects to buy corn with chaff, or Gold with droſs. But in our dealings with God, we put off even this common equity; are vaſt in our expectations, but penurious and baſe in our returns; and as if God were our ſteward, not our Lord, we require of him with a confidence proper only to thoſe who ask their own: whilſt in the interim, what we offer to him is with ſuch a diſdainful ſlighting, as if we meant it rather an alms than an homage.

Gods firſt donations are free, but his ſubſequent are conditional.

2. God is indeed ſo munificent, that he *prevents us with his bleſſings*, Pſ.21.3. gives us many things before we ask: Had he not done ſo, we could not have bin ſo much as in a capacity of asking. But tho' the firſt and fundamental mercies are abſolute and free, yet the ſubſequent are conditional: and accordingly we find in Scripture, that God makes no promiſe either

concerning this life or a better, but on condition of obedience. The *Jews* who had much larger propoſals of temporal happineſs than Chriſtians have, yet never had them upon other terms. God expreſly articled for the performance of his commands, and made all their enjoyments forfeitable upon the failure, as we may ſee at large in the book of Deuteronomy. And under the Goſpel St. *Paul* appropriates the *promiſes as well of this life as that to come unto godlineſs*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. It will therefore be a material inquiry for every man, whether he have kept his title entire, and have not by breach of the condition forfeited his claim, even to the moſt common ordinary bleſſings; for if he have, common reaſon will tell him he can challenge none: and that the utmoſt he can hope for, muſt be only upon a new ſcore of unmerited favor.

Our ſervices make a very unequal return to our obligations.

3. And here certainly *every mouth muſt be ſtopped, and all the world become guilty before God*, Rom. 3. 19. For alas who is there that can ſay his obedience has bin in any degree proportionable to his obligation? 'Tis manifeſt we have all received abundantly from Gods hand, but what has he had from ours? I may challenge the beſt man, to caſt up the account of his beſt day, and tell me whether his receits have not infinitly exceeded his disburſments: whether for any one good thing he has done, he has not received many. Nor is the diſparity only in number, but much more in value. Gods works are perfect, all he do's for us like the firſt ſix daies productions, *are all very good*, Gen. 1. but alas our very *righteouſneſs is as filthy rags*, Eſai. 64. 6. we offer *him the blind and the lame*, Mal. 1. 9. a few yawning drowſy prayers perhaps, wherein he has the leaſt ſhare: the fuller current of our thoughts running towards our ſecular or ſinful concerns. We drop it may be a ſcanty Alms, wherein 'tis odds our vain glory ſcrambles for a ſhare with him; if it do not wholly ingroſs it. We ſit an hour at a Sermon, but 'tis rather to hear the wit or eloquence of the Preacher, than the word of God. Like the duller ſort of animals, we like well to have our itching ears ſcratcht, but grow ſturdy and reſtive when we ſhould do what we are there taught. In a word all our ſervices at the beſt are miſerably maim'd and imperfect; and too often corrupt and unſound. So that God may well upbraid us as he did *Iſrael*, *offer it now to thy governor, will he be pleaſed with it*? Mal. 1. 8. Theſe very iniquities of our holy things, are enough to defeat all our pretences to any good from Gods hand; yet God knows this is much the beſt ſide of us: 'tis not every one that can make ſo fair an appearance as this amounts to. With many, there is no place to complain of the blemiſhes of their ſacrifices, for they offer none; of whom we may ſay in the words of the Pſalmiſt, *God is not in all their thoughts*, Pſal. 10. 4. I fear there want not thoſe who drive away the day, the week, nay the year, without remembring in whoſe *hand their time is*, Pſal. 31. 18. or paying him any ſolemn tribute of it; who enjoy the ſervices of all inferior creatures, without conſidering that theirs are more due to the ſupreme Lord: in a word, who live as if they were abſolutely independent; had their exiſtence purely from themſelves, and had no Creator to whom they owed their being, or any conſequent duty. And ſure men who thus diſcard themſelves from Gods family, have very little reaſon to expect the proviſions of it: yet even ſuch as theſe have the impudence to complain, if any thing be wanting to their needs (ſhall I ſay) or their luſts; can ravingly profane Gods name in their impatiences, which they know not how to uſe in their prayers: as if the Deity were conſiderable in no other notion, than that of their caterer or ſteward.

God's patience herein, is moſt admirable.

4. If now we ſeriouſly reflect, what can be more admirable than that infinite patience of God; who notwithſtanding the miſerable infirmities of the pious, and the lewd contemt of the impious, ſtill goes on reſolutely in his bounty, and continues to all mankind ſome, and to ſome all his temporal bleſſings? He has no obligation of juſtice to do ſo, for it is no part of his compact; he has none of gratitude, for he is perpetually affronted and diſobliged. Surely we may well ſay with *David, Is this after the manner of men, O Lord*? 1 Chron. 17. 17. Can the higheſt human indulgence bear any proportion with his divine Clemency? No certainly, no finite patience but would be exhauſted with the thouſandth part of our provocations.

And ſo is the inſolence of our repining.

5. But is not our dealing too as little after the manner of men? I mean of reaſonable creatures: for us who have forfeited our right to all, and yet by mere favor are kept in poſſeſſion of many bleſſings: for us to grow mutinous, becauſe there is perhaps ſomething more trifling which is denied us, is ſuch a ſtupid ingratitude, as one would think impoſſible to human nature. Should a Tenant with us have at once forfeited his leaſe and maliciouſly affronted his Landlord, he would ſure think himſelf very gently dealt with, if he were ſuffer'd to enjoy but a part of his firſt eſtate; but we ſhould think him not only inſolent, but mad, who when the whole were left him, ſhould quarrel and clamor if he might not have his Cottage adorn'd with marble floors, and guilded roofs. Yet at this wild rate we behave our ſelves to our great Landlord, grow pettiſh and angry if we have not every thing we can fancy, tho' we enjoy many more uſeful, merely by his indulgence. And can there be any thing imagin'd more unreaſonable? Let us therefore, if not for piety, yet at leaſt to juſtify our claim to rationality, be more ingenuous: let us not conſult only with our fond appetites, and be thus perpetually ſolliciting their ſatisfaction; but rather reflect on what tenure we hold what we already have, even that of ſuperabundant mercy; and fear leſt like inſolent beggars by the inſolence of our demands we divert even that charity which was deſign'd us. In ſhort let every man when he computes what he wants of his deſires, reckon as exactly how much he is ſhort of his duty; and when he has duly ponder'd both, he will think it a very gentle compoſition to have the one unſupplied, ſo he may have the other remitted; and will ſee cauſe contentedly to ſit down and ſay with honeſt *Mephiboſheth, What right have I to cry any more unto the King*? 2 Sam. 19. 28. But if it be thus with us upon the mere ſcore of our imperfections or omiſſions, what an obnoxious ſtate do our innumerable actual ſins put us in? If the ſpots of our ſacrifices are provoking, what are our ſacrileges and bold profanations? If thoſe who neglect or forget God are liſted among his enemies, what are thoſe who avowedly defy him? Indeed he that ſoberly conſiders the world, and ſees how daringly the Divine Majeſty is daily affronted, cannot but wonder that the perverſions of our manners, thoſe prodigies in morality, ſhould not be anſwer'd with as great prodigies in calamity too: that we ſhould ever have other ruin than that of *Sodom*, or the earth ſerve us for any other purpoſe than to be, as it was to *Korah*, Numb. 16. our living ſepulcher.

Our ill demerit towards God has all poſſible aggravations.

6. Nor is this longanimity of God obſervable only towards the maſs and collective body of mankind, but to every man in particular. Who is there that if he ranſack his conſcience, ſhall not find guilts enough to juſtify God in the utmoſt ſeverities towards him? ſo that how much ſoever his puniſhments are ſhort of that, ſo much he evidently owes to the lenity and compaſſion of God. And who is there that ſuffers in this world the utmoſt

that God can inflict? We have a great many ſuffering capacities, and if thoſe were all fill'd up to the height, our condition would ſcarce differ from that of the damned in any thing but duration. But God is more merciful, and never inflicts at that rate on us here. Every mans experience can tell him, that God diſcharges not his whole quiver at once upon him, but exemts him in many more particulars than he afflicts him; and yet the ſame experience will probably tell moſt of us, that we are not ſo modeſt in our aſſaults upon God; we attacque him in all his concerns, (as far as our feeble malice can reach) in his Soveraignty, in his honor, in his relatives, nay ſometimes in his very eſſence and being. And as they are univerſal in reſpect of him, ſo alſo in regard of our ſelves. We engage all our powers in this war, do not only *yield* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *our members inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs*, Rom. 6. 19. but we preſs them upon the ſervice of ſenſual and vile luſts, even beyond our native propenſions. Nor are only the members of our body, but the faculties of our ſouls alſo thus emploied; our underſtandings are buſied firſt in contriving ſins, and then excuſes and diſguiſes for them; our wills are yet more ſturdy rebels, and when the underſtanding is beat out of all its out-works, yet ſullenly keep their hold in ſpight of all conviction; and our affections madly ruſh on *like the horſe into the battle*, Jer. 8. 6. deterred by nothing of danger, ſo there be but ſin enough in the attemt.

And were not God infinitly merciful, would be fatal to the guilty.

7. And now with what face can people that thus purſue an hoſtility, expect that it ſhould not be return'd to them? Do's any man denounce war, and yet expect from his adverſary all the careſſes, the obligements of friendſhip? ſelf-defence will promt even the meekeſt nature to deſpoil his enemy, at leaſt of thoſe things which he uſes to his annoiance; and if God ſhould give way even to that loweſt degree of anger, where or what were we? For ſince we employ our whole ſelves againſt him, nothing but deſtruction can avert our injuries. But 'tis happy for us we have to do with one who cannot fear us, who knows the impotence of our wild attemts, and ſo allaies his reſentment of our inſolence, with his pity of our follies. Were it not for this, we ſhould not be left in a poſſibility ſo oft to iterate our provocations. Every wicked imagination and black deſign, would be at once defeated and puniſht by infatuation and frenzy: every blaſphemous Atheiſtical ſpeech would wither the tongue like that *arm of Jeroboam* which he ſtretcht againſt the Prophet, 1 Kings 13. 4. and every impious act would like the prohibited retroſpect of *Lots* wife, fix us perpetual monuments of Divine vengeance.

Which forbearance ought to lead to repentance.

8. And then how much do we owe to the mercy and commiſeration of our God, that *he ſuffers not his whole diſpleſure to ariſe*, Pſ. 78. 38. that he abates any thing of that juſt ſeverity he might uſe towards us? He that is condemned to the Gallows, would think it a mercy to ſcape with any inferior penalty: why have we then ſuch mean thoughts of God's Clemency, when he deſcends to ſuch low compoſitions with us, corrects us ſo lightly, as if 'twere only matter of ceremony and punctilio, the regard of his honor, rather than the execution of his wrath? For alas let him among us that is the moſt innocent and undeſervedly afflicted, muſter up his ſins & ſufferings, and he will ſee a vaſt inequality: and (had he not other grounds of aſſurance) would be almoſt temted to think thoſe were not the provoking cauſe, they are ſo unproportionably anſwered. He ſins in innumerable inſtances, and is puniſht in few; he ſins habitually and perpetually, and ſuffers rarely and ſeldom; nay perhaps he has ſometimes ſin'd with greedineſs, and yet God has puniſht with regret and reluctancy, *How ſhall I give thee*

thee up, O Ephraim? Hoſ. 11. 8. And when all theſe diſparities are conſider'd, we muſt certainly joyn heartily in *Ezra*'s confeſſion, *Thou, O God, haſt puniſht us leſs than our iniquities deſerve*, Ezra 9. 13.

Our after-guilts or repinings aggravate our precedent provocations.

9. Nay beſides all our antecedent, we have after-guilts no leſs provoking, I mean our ungracious repinings at the light chaſtiſements of our former ſins, our out-cries upon every little uneaſineſs, which may juſtly cauſe God to turn our whips into ſcorpions; and according as he threatned *Iſrael*, Lev. 26. 18. *to puniſh us yet ſeven times more*. And yet even this do's not immediatly exaſperate him. The *Jews* were an inſtance how long he could bear with a murmuring generation, but certainly we of this nation are a greater: *yet let us not be high-minded, but fear*, Rom. 11. 20. for we ſee at laſt the doom fell heavy, tho' it was protracted: a ſucceſſion of miraculous judgments purſued thoſe murmurers, ſo that not one of them enter'd *Canaan*. And 'tis very obſervable that whereas to other ſins God's denunciations are in Scripture conditional and reverſible; this was abſolute and bound with an oath, *He ſware in his wrath that they ſhould not enter into his reſt*, Pſalm 95. 11. And yet if we compare the hardſhips of the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs, with moſt of our ſufferings, we ſhall be forced to confeſs our mutinies have leſs temtation, and conſequently leſs excuſe. From whence 'tis very reaſonable to infer, as the greatneſs of our danger if we perſiſt, ſo the greatneſs of God's long-ſuffering towards us, who yet allows us ſpace to reform: and ſure new complaints ſound very ill from us, who are liable to ſo ſevere an account for our old ones. I fear the moſt reſign'd perſons of us will upon recollection find, they have upon one occaſion or other out-vied the number of the *Iſraelites* murmurs: therefore unleſs we will emulate them in their plagues, let us fear to add one more, leaſt that make up the fatal ſum, & render our deſtruction irrevocable.

Eſpecially when our ſufferings are the immediate effects of our ſins.

10. Upon all theſe conſiderations it appears how little reaſon any of us have to repine at our heavieſt preſſures; but there is yet a farther circumſtance to be adverted to, and is too applicable to many of us, that is, that our ſins are not only the conſtant meritorious cauſe of our ſufferings, but they are alſo very often the inſtrumental cauſe alſo; and produce them not only by way of retaliation from God, but by a natural efficacy. *Solomon* tells us, he that *loves pleſure, ſhall be a poor man*, and that *a whoriſh woman will bring a man to a piece of bread*, Prov. 6. 26. *that he that ſits long at the wine ſhall have redneſs of eies*, Chap. 23. 29, 30. *that the ſlothful ſoul ſhall ſuffer hunger*, 19. 15. and all theſe not by immediate ſupernatural infliction from God, but as the proper genuine effects of thoſe reſpective vices. Indeed God in his original eſtabliſhment of things, has made ſo cloſe a connexion between ſin and puniſhment, that he is not often put to exert his power in any extraordinary way, but may truſt us to be our own Lictors, our own *backſlidings reprove us*, Jer. 2. 19. *and our iniquities are* of themſelves enough to *become our ruin*, Exod. 18. 38.

In all calamities it will be fit for us to enquire how far we are acceſſary to them.

11. It may therefore be a ſeaſonable queſtion for every man to put to himſelf, whether the troubles he labors under be not of this ſort; whether the poverty he complains of, be not the effect of his riot and profuſion, his ſloth and negligence? whether when he cries out that *his comelineſs is turn'd into corruption*, Dan. 10. 8. he may not anſwer himſelf, that they are his viſits to the harlots houſes which have thus made *rottenneſs enter into his bones*, Hab. 3. 16. whether when he is beſet with contentions, and has wounds without cauſe, *he have not tarried long at the wine*; when he has loſt his friend, whether he have not by ſome *trecherous wound*, Eccl. 22. 22. forced him to depart: or when he lies under infamy, whether it be not

only the Echo of his own ſcandalous crimes? If he find it thus with him, certainly his mouth is ſtopt, and cannot without the moſt diſingenuous impudence complain of any but himſelf. He could not be ignorant that ſuch effects do naturally attend ſuch cauſes, and therefore if he would take the one, he muſt take the other alſo. No man ſure can be ſo mad, as to think God ſhould work ſuch miracles (diſunite thoſe things which nature has conjoyn'd) only that he may ſin at eaſe, have all the beſtial pleaſures he can project, and none of the conſequent ſmart. We read indeed God divided the ſea, but it was to make *the way for the ranſom'd of the Lord to paſs over*, Iſa. 15. 10. thoſe who were his own people, and went in at his command; but when they were ſecured, we find the waters immediately returned to their channel, and overwhelm'd the Egyptians, who ventured without the ſame warrant. And ſure the caſe is alike here, when any man can produce God's mandate for him to run into all exceſs of riot, to deſecrate the temple of the Holy Ghoſt, *and make his body the member of an harlot*, 1 Cor 6. 15. in a word when God bids him do any of thoſe things, which God and good men abhor, then and not before he may hope he may ſever ſuch acts from their native penal effects; for till then (how profuſe ſoever ſome Legendary ſtories repreſent him) he will certainly never ſo beſtow his miracles.

Men are ſo impious to murmur becauſe they have not materials to be wicked enough.

12. But I fear upon ſcrutiny there will appear a yet farther circumſtance upon which to arraign our mutinies: for tho' it be unreaſonable enough to charge God with the ill effects of our own lewdneſs, yet 'tis a higher ſtep to murmur becauſe we have not materials to be wicked enough. And this I fear is the caſe with too many of us, who tho' they are not ſo deſpoil'd by their ſins, but that they can keep up their round of vicious pleaſures, yet are diſcontented becauſe they think ſome others have them more exquiſite, think their vices are not Gentile enough, unleſs they be very expenſive, and are covetous only that they may be more Luxurious. Theſe are ſuch as St. *James* ſpeaks of, *who ask amiſs, that they may conſume it upon their luſts*, James 4. 3. and ſure to be mutinous on this account is one of the higheſt pieces of frenzy. Would any man in his wits tell another he will cut his throat, and then expect he ſhould furniſh him with a knife for it? And yet to this amount our murmurs againſt God, for his not giving us thoſe things wherewith we only deſign to wage war with him. For ſurely if the diſcontents of mankind were cloſely inſpected, I doubt a great many would be found of this kind. It concerns the Reader therefore to make the inquiſition in his own breaſt, both in this and all the former particulars; and I doubt not, if he do it with any ingenuity and uprightneſs, he will be abundantly convinc'd that for his few mites of obedience he pays to God, he receives talents of mercies (even temporal) from him: and that on the other ſide, that God as much under pays his ſins, as he over pays his ſervices: by which God do's ſufficiently atteſt how little he delights in our affliction, how gladly he takes any light occaſion of careſſing and cheriſhing, and over-skips thoſe of puniſhing us. Which ſure ought to make us convert all our diſpleaſures againſt our ſins, which extort thoſe acts of ſeverity from him, to which his nature is moſt averſe. And here indeed our reſentments cannot be too ſharp, but towards God our fitteſt addreſs will be in the penitential form of the Prophet Daniel: *O Lord to us belongeth confuſion of face, but to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveneſs, tho' we have rebelled againſt him*, Dan. 9. 8, 9. And as his juſtice is to be revered in his inflictions, ſo is his wiſdom alſo, in ſo diſpoſing of events to particular perſons, as may beſt conſiſt with the univerſal œconomy

nomy and managery of the world, the conſideration whereof is the deſign of the next Section.

SECT. VI.

Of Gods general Providence.

Providence which extends to all parts of the creation, is peculiarly careful of men.

1. WHen God made the univerſe, he intended not only to glorify himſelf in one tranſient act of his power, and then leave this great and wonderful production of his, as the *Oſtrich her eggs* in the wilderneſs, Lam. 4. 3. but having drawn it out of its firſt Chaos, he ſecur'd it from returning thither again, by eſtabliſhing as a due ſymmetry of parts, ſo alſo a regular order of motion. Hence it is that the heavens have their conſtant revolutions, the earth its ſucceſſion of determinate ſeaſons, animals their eternal courſe of generation and corruption: and by this wiſe œconomy, the world after ſo many thouſand years, ſeems ſtill in its ſpring and firſt beauty. But it had bin in vain to have thus ſecured the defection of the creatures, if man for whoſe ſake they were made had bin excluded from this care. His faculty of reaſon would have made him but the more fatal inſtrument of confuſion, and taught him the more compendious waies of diſturbing the world. *Job* compares him *to the wild aſſes colt*, Job 11. 12. which takes its range without adverting to any thing of the common good. God has therefore doubly hedged in this unruly creature, made a fence of laws about him (both natural and poſitive) and beſides has taken him into the common circle of his Providence, ſo that he, as well as the reſt of the creation, has his particular ſtation aſſign'd him, and that not only in reference to other creatures, but himſelf; has put a difference between one man and another, ordained ſeveral ranks and Claſſes of men, and endowed them with ſpecial and appropriate qualifications for thoſe ſtations wherein he has ſet them.

This over-ruling power is of unſpeakable advantage to mankind.

2. This, as it is a work of infinite wiſdom in God, ſo it is of unſpeakable advantage to men. Without this regular diſpoſure, the world would have bin the ſame confuſion which we read of in the hoſt of the *Midianites, every mans ſword againſt his fellow*, Jud. 7. 22. Nothing but force could determine who ſhould do, or enjoy any thing; and even that deciſion alſo would have bin repealable by a greater force: ſo that we have all reaſon to confeſs the utility of that order God has ſet among men: and even he that bears the loweſt and moſt deſpicable place in it, is certainly infinitly more happy by contributing to that general Harmony, than he could be in any ſtate of diſcord.

A due conſideration whereof ſilences all complaints.

3. Were this now well conſider'd, methinks it ſhould ſilence all our complaints, and men ſhould not be ſo vehemently concern'd in what part of the ſtructure it pleaſes the great Architect to put them, for every man is to look on himſelf only as a ſmall parcel of thoſe materials which God is to put into form. Every ſtone is not fit for the corner, nor every little raſter for the main beam: the wiſdom of the Maſter builder is alone to determine that. And ſure there cannot be a more vile contemt of the Divine wiſdom than to diſpute his choice. Had God wiſdom enough to contrive this vaſt and beautiful fabric, and may he not be truſted with one of us poor worms? Did he by his ***wiſdom make the heavens, and by his underſtanding ſtretch out the clouds***, Prov. 3. 19. and ſhall he not know where

to place a little lump of figur'd earth? This is certainly the moſt abſurd diſtruſt imaginable, and yet this is really the true meaning of our repining at the condition he has placed us in.

'Tis moſt unreaſonable to expect that the ſcheme of Providence ſhould be modell'd by our humor.

4. The truth is, we are ſo full of our ſelves, that we can ſee nothing beyond it: every man expects God ſhould place him where he has a mind to be, tho' by it he diſcompoſe the whole ſcheme of his Providence. But tho' we are ſo ſenſeleſly partial, yet God is not ſo: he that comprehends at once the whole concern of mankind, applies himſelf to the accommodating thoſe, not the humoring any particular perſon. *He has made the great and ſmall, and careth for all alike,* Wiſd. 6. 7. He is the common Father of mankind, and diſpoſes things for the public advantage of this great Family, and 'tis not all the impatient cravings of a froward child that ſhall make him recede from his deſigned method. We are apt enough, I am ſure, to tax it not only as a weakneſs, but injuſtice too in a Prince, when he indulges any thing to a private Favorite to the public diſadvantage; yet ſo unequal we are, that we murmur at God for not doing that, which we murmur at men for doing.

Other men have the ſame appetites with us, and cannot be ſatisfied but by our diſappointment.

5. Beſides a man is to conſider, that other men have the ſame appetites with himſelf. If he diſlike an inferior ſtate, why ſhould he not think others do ſo too? And then as the Wiſe man ſpeaks, *whoſe voice ſhall the Lord hear*? Ecclus. 34. 24. 'Tis ſure great inſolence in me to expect that God ſhould be more concern'd to humor me, than thoſe multitudes of others who have the ſame deſires. And the more impatient my longings are, the leſs in reaſon ſhould be my hopes; for mutiny is no ſuch endearing quality as to render any man a dearling to God. But if all men ſhould have equal ſatisfaction, we ſhould puzle even Omnipotence it ſelf. Every man would be above and ſuperior: yet thoſe are comparative terms, and if no man were below, no man could be above. So in wealth, moſt men deſire more, but every man do's at leaſt deſire to keep what he has; how then ſhall one part of the world be ſupplied without the diminution of the other, unleſs there ſhould be as miraculous a multiplication of treſure for mens avarice, as there was of Loaves for their hunger, Matt. 16. 9. It was a good anſwer which the Ambaſſadors of an oppreſt Province made to *Antony*; If, O Emperor, thou wilt have double taxes from us, thou muſt help us to double Springs and Harveſts. And ſure God muſt be at the expence of a new Creation, make us a double world, if he ſhould oblige himſelf to ſatisfy all the unreaſonable appetites of men: and if he ſatisfy not all, why ſhould any particular perſon look that his alone ſhould be indulged to?

Self-love is the ſource of moſt of our complaints.

6. Yet as unreaſonable as it is, the moſt of us do betray ſuch a perſwaſion. No man is diſcontented that there are lower, as well as higher degrees in the world, that there are poor as well as rich, but all ſenſible men aſſent to the fitneſs of it: yet if themſelves happen to be ſet in the lower form, they exclame as if the whole order of the world were ſubverted; which is a palpable indication that they think that Providence which governs others, ſhould ſerve them, and diſtribute to them not what it, but themſelves think good. This immoderate Self-love is the Spring and root of moſt of our complaints, makes us ſuch unequal judges in our own concerns, and promts us to put in Caveats and exceptions in our own behalf, as *David* did on his ſon's, *See that thou hurt not the young man Abſalom,* 2 Sam. 18. 15. as if God were to manage the government of the world with a particular regard to our liking, and were like the Angels at *Sodom*, Gen. 19. 22. to *do nothing till we had got into Zoar*, had all our demands ſecured to us.

We have in us the worſt part of the Leveller's principle, impatient to ſee any above us.

7. It would indeed aſtoniſh a conſidering man to ſee, that altho' the concerns of men are all diſpoſed by an unerring Wiſdom, and acknowledged by themſelves to be ſo, yet that ſcarce any man is pleaſed. The truth is, we have generally in us the worſer part of the Levellers principle, and tho' we can very contentedly behold multitudes below us, yet are impatient to ſee any above us; not only the *foot* (to uſe the Apoſtle's ſimile) *complains that it is not the hand, but the ear becauſe it is not the eye*, 1 Cor. 12. 15, 16. Not only the lowermoſt, but the higher ranks of men are uneaſy, if there be any one ſtep above them. Nay ſo importunate is this aſpiring humor, that we ſee men are forc'd to feed it tho' but with air and ſhadows. He that cannot make any real advance in his quality, will yet do it in effigie, in all little gayeties and pageantries of it. Every degree in theſe reſpects not only emulates, but imitates its ſuperior, till at laſt by that impatience of their proper diſtance they make it greater, and ſink even below their firſt ſtate by their ridiculous profuſion. Indeed the world ſeems to be ſo over-run with this vanity, that there is little viſible diſtinction of degrees, and one had need go to the Heralds office to know mens qualities, for neither their habit nor equipage do now adaies inform us with any certainty.

And conſider only our own humor or convenience, and not the public intereſt.

8. But by all theſe it appears that men look on themſelves only as ſingle perſons, without reference to the community whereof they are members. For did they conſider that, they would endevor rather to become the places wherein they were ſet, by doing the duties belonging to them, than be perpetually projecting for a change. A tree that is every year tranſplanted will never bear fruit; and a mind that is alwaies hurried from its proper ſtation, will ſcarce ever do good in any. This is excellently expreſt to us by *Solomon*, *As a bird that wandereth from his neſt, ſo is a man that wandereth from his place*, Prov. 27. 8. 'Tis eaſy to divine the fate of thoſe young ones from whom the dam wanders, and 'tis as eaſy to gueſs how the duties of that place will be performed, whoſe owner is alwaies upon the wing and making towards another. I wiſh we had not too coſtly experiments both in Church and State of the truth of this obſervation. Alas we forget that we are all ſervants to the ſame Maſter, and that he is to appoint in what office we ſhall ſerve him. How ſhould we like it in any of our own families, to have an inferior officer leave his work undone, becauſe he has more mind to be Major-Domo? Yet this inſolence we every day repete towards God, ſullenly diſpute his orders, and unleſs we may chuſe our own employments, will do nothing.

The reſtraint put upon ambitious ſpirits, is a great inſtance of providence.

9. 'Tis evident this perverſe temper of mankind breeds a great deal of miſchief and diſturbance in the world, but would breed arrant confuſion and ſubverſion, if it were ſuffer'd to have its full range. If God permit but one ambitious ſpirit to break looſe in an age as the inſtrument of his wrath, what deſtruction do's it often times make? How do's it *cauſe the whole earth to tremble, and ſhake kingdoms*, as is ſaid of *Nebuchadnezzar*, Iſa. 14. 16. and may be ſaid of many others of thoſe whole-ſale robbers who have dignified the trade? But if every aſpiring humor ſhould be as proſperous, where would it find fuel to maintain the flame? No doubt every age produces men of as unbounded deſires as *Alexander* or *Cæſar*, but God gives them not the ſame opportunities to trouble the world. And accordingly in the more petty ambitions of private men he often orders it ſo, that thoſe ſoaring minds can find no benign gale to help their mounting. He that ſets bounds to the ſea, ſaying, *hitherto ſhalt thou come and no farther, and tho' the waves thereof do toſs themſelves, yet can they not prevail*; *tho'*

they roar, yet can they not paſs over, Jer. 5. 22. do's alſo depreſs the ſwelling pride of men, hangs clogs and weights upon them that they cannot riſe to their affected height. For tho' we are all willing to forget it, yet God remembers that he is the Rector of the Univerſe, and will aſſert his Dominion. The ſubtileſt contrivance cannot circumvent him, the moſt daring pretender cannot wreſt any thing out of his hand; the *Lord will ſtill be King, be the people never ſo impatient,* Pſ. 99. 1. 'Twill therefore ſure be as well our prudence as our duty to *be ſtill, and know that he is God,* Pſal. 46. 10. with an humble dereliction of our own wills acquieſce in his, and not by ineffective ſtruglings provoke, whom we are ſure never to ſubdue. We may like unmanaged horſes fome and fret, but ſtill God has the bridle in our jaws, and we cannot advance a ſtep farther than he permits us. Why ſhould we then create torment to our ſelves by our repinings, which only ſets us farther from our aims? 'Tis God's declared method to exalt the lowly, and 'tis obſervable in the firſt two Kings of *Iſrael,* who were of Gods immediate election, that he ſurpriſed them with that dignity when they were about mean and humble employments, the one ſearching his father's Aſs, the other keeping his father's Sheep: and would men honeſtly and diligently exerciſe themſelves in the buſineſs of their proper calling, they might perhaps find it a more direct road to advancement, than all the ſiniſter arts by which ambitious men endevor to climb. *Solomon* ſets it down as an Aphoriſm, *ſeeſt thou a man diligent in his buſineſs, he ſhall ſtand before Kings, he ſhall not ſtand before mean men,* Prov. 22. 29. But whether it happen to have that effect or no, it will have a better; for it will ſweeten his preſent condition, divert his mind from mutinous reflections on other mens height, and his own lowneſs; for 'tis commonly men who mind not their work that are at ſo much leiſure to gaze. He that carefully plies his own buſineſs, will have his thoughts more concentred. And doubtleſs 'tis no ſmall happineſs to have them ſo, for 'tis their gadding too much abroad, looking on other mens conditions, that ſends them back (like *Dinah* deflowred) to put all in an uproar at home. The ſon of *Syrach* ſpeaks with tranſportation of the ſtate even of him that labors and is content, and calls it *a ſweet life,* Ecclus. 40. 18. And certainly 'tis infinitely more ſo than that of the greateſt Prince whoſe mind ſwells beyond his territories.

No man's ſtation is ſo obſcure as to hide him from the eyes of God.

10. Upon all theſe conſiderations it cannot but appear very reaſonable that we ſhould leave God to govern the world, not be puting in like the ſons of *Zebedee* for the higheſt ſeats; but contentedly reſt our ſelves where he has placed us, till his providence (not our own deſigns) advance us. We can no where be ſo obſcure as to be hid from his eyes: who as he valued the widow's mite above the great oblations of the rich, ſo he will no leſs graciouſly accept the humble endevors of the mean, than the more eminent ſervices of the mighty; himſelf having declared, that he accepts *according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not,* 2 Cor. 8. 12. So that in what rank ſoever a man is ſet, he has ſtill the ſame opportunity of approving himſelf to God: and tho' in the eye of the world he be a veſſel of diſhonor, yet in the day when God comes to *make up his Jewels,* Mal. 3. 17. there will be another eſtimate made of him who regularly moves in his own ſphere. And ſure he that ſits down in this acquieſcence is a happier man, than he that enjoys the greateſt wordly ſplendor: but infinitly more ſo than he who impatiently covets but cannot attain them; for ſuch a man puts himſelf upon a perpetual rack, keeps his appetites up at the uttermoſt ſtretch, and yet has nothing wherewith to ſatisfy them. Let therefore our eaſe, if not our duty, promt us to acquieſcence,

quieſcence, and a ready ſubmiſſion to God's diſpoſals, to which we have yet a farther inducement from that diſtinct care he hath over every man's peculiar, by which he proportions to him what is really beſt for him; of which we are farther to conſider in the next Section.

Sect. VII.

Of God's particular Providence.

'Tis the imperfection of our nature, that we cannot attend at once to ſeveral things.

1. IT is the imperfection of our finite nature that we cannot at once attend to divers things, but the more vehement our intention is upon one, the greater is our neglect of the reſt. But God's infinity cannot be ſo bounded; his eyes at once ſee, and his Providence at once orders all the moſt diſtant and diſparate things in the world. He is not ſuch an Epicurean Deity, as to ſequeſter himſelf wholly to the enjoyment of his own felicity, and to deſpiſe the concerns of poor martals; but tho' he have his *dwelling ſo high, yet he humbleth himſelf to behold the things in heaven and earth*, Pſalm 113. 5. Nor do's his Providence confine it ſelf to the more ſplendid and greater parts of managery, the conduct of Empires and States, but it deſcends to the loweſt parts of his Creation, to the *fowls* of the air, to the *lilies* of the field, and then ſure our Savior's inference as to mankind is irrefragable, *Are ye not much better than they*? Matt. 6. 26. If a ſparrow (as he elſewhere tells his diſciples) cannot fall to the ground without God's particular notice, ſurely no human creature is leſs conſiderable to him; nay if our very hairs are numbred, we cannot think the excreſcence is of more value than the ſtock, but muſt conclude that God with a particular advertence watches over the concerns of every man.

God is infinitly good, as well as omniſcient.

2. Now God being infinitly good, cannot thus attend us upon any infidious deſign of doing us miſchief: he watches over us as a guardian, not as a ſpy; and directs his obſervation to the more ſeaſonable adapting his benefits. And as he is thus gracious in deſigning our advantage, ſo he is no leſs wiſe in contriving it. *All things*, ſaies the Wiſe man, *are not profitable for all men*, Ecclus. 37. 28. Indeed nothing is abſolutely good but God: all created things are good or ill in reference to that to which they are applied. Meat is good, but to a ſurfeited ſtomach 'tis not only nauſeous but dangerous. Fire is good, but if put in our boſoms, not only burns our cloths but fleſh. And as human wiſdom directs the right application of theſe and the like, ſo the ſupreme and divine orders events according to the diſpoſition of the perſon concern'd; *he knows our frame*, Pſal. 103. 14. and diſcerns what operation ſuch or ſuch things will have upon us, while we who know neither our ſelves nor them, can make but random gueſſes, and worſe choices. And ſure he that do's but thus in the general acknowledge God's providence, goodneſs and wiſdom (which he is no Chriſtian who do's not) has a ſufficient amulet againſt all his ſollicitudes, much more his repinings. He cannot think he ſuffers unawares to him who ſees all things. He cannot think his ſufferings are deſign'd for ill to him, becauſe they are diſpos'd by him who intends and projects his good. Nor can he fear thoſe intentions can miſcarry, which are guided by an infinite and unerring wiſdom, and backt by an uncontroulable power. And ſure this is as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Heb.* 6. 18. *ſtrong conſolation*, if we would but duely apply it.

Our afflictions are either privative or poſitive.

3. Yet becauſe general notions do often make but light impreſſions on us, it may not be amiſs to make a little more inſpection, and to obſerve how applicable they are to the ſeveral kinds of our diſcontents. Now thoſe may be reduced to two: for either we are troubled at the want of ſomthing we deſire, or the ſuffering of ſomthing we would avert: ſo that the two notions of privative and poſitive divide between them all our affliction.

The privative is moſt unbounded.

4. The firſt of theſe is uſually the moſt comprehenſive, for there are few who have not more torment from the apprehenſion of ſomwhat they want, than from the ſmart of any thing they feel. And indeed whilſt our deſires are ſo vagrant and exorbitant, they will be ſure to furniſh matter enough for our diſcontents. But certainly there is not in the world ſuch a charm for them, as the conſideration that God is more wiſe to diſcern, and more careful to provide what is really good for us than we our ſelves. We poor purblind creatures look only on the ſurface of things, and if we ſee a beautiful appearance, ſomwhat that invites our ſenſes, we court it with the utmoſt earneſtneſs; but God penetrates deeper, he ſees to the bottom both of us and thoſe things we deſire, and finds often that tho' they may pleaſe our appetite, they will hurt our health: and will no more give them to us, than a careful Father will to his Child thoſe gilded poiſons he cries for. Perhaps this man is taken with the enchanted muſic of Fame, likes not his own obſcure ſtation, but would fain preſent himſelf upon a more public Theater, come into the eye and crowd of the world; but how little do's he know how he ſhall act his part there: whether he ſhall come off with a plaudit or a hiſs? He may render himſelf but the more public ſpectacle of ſcorn; or if he do not that, he may by a better ſucceſs feed up his vain glory to ſuch a bulk, as may render him too great a weight for that tottering pinnacle whereon it ſtands: and ſo after he has made a towring circle, he may fall back with more ignominy to his firſt point. Another it may be no leſs eagerly deſires wealth, thinks (as once *Crœſus* did) that he that abounds in treſure, cannot be empty of felicity; but alas how knows he how he ſhall employ it: There are two contrary temtations that attend riches; riots, and covetouſneſs: and he is ſure a little too confident, that dares promiſe himſelf that when there is ſuch odds againſt him, he ſhall certainly chuſe the one juſt mean: and if he do not, he do's only inflame his account at the great Audit. Beſides the more wealth he has, the fairer booty he is to the avarice of others; and it has bin often ſeen, that many a man had not died ſo poor, if he had lived leſs rich. Another perhaps thinks not himſelf ſo much to want wealth as children to heir it, and complains with *Abraham, Lord, what wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go childleſs*? Gen. 15. 2. yet how knows he whether that child he ſo much deſires *ſhall be a wiſe man or a fool*, Eccl. 2. 19. a comfort or a vexation to himſelf if he live to ſee his proof? and if he do not, he do's but project for an acceſs to his dying cares in what hands to leave him. *Rachel* ſollicited this ſatisfaction with the greateſt impatience, *give me children or I die*, Gen. 30. 1. and 'tis obſervable that the grant of her wiſh proved the loſs of her life.

We generally make our ſelves miſerable for want of thoſe things whoſe poſſeſſion would make us miſerable.

5. Thus in theſe and innumerable other inſtances we drive on blindfold, and very often impetuouſly purſue that which would ruin us: and were God as ſhort ſighted as we, into what precipices ſhould we minutely hurry our ſelves? or were he ſo unkind as to conſider our importunity more than our intereſt, we ſhould quickly ſink under the weight of our own wiſhes; and as *Juvenal* in his tenth Satyr excellently obſerves, periſh by the ſucceſs and grant of our prayers. I ſuppoſe there is no man that ſoberly

ly recollects the events of his life, but can experimentally ſay, he has ſometimes deſired things which would have bin to his miſchief if he had had them, and that himſelf has after lookt on the denial as a mercy: as on the other ſide when he has proſper'd in his aims, and had what his ſoul luſted after, it has bin but like the quailes of the *Iſraelites*, a conviction and puniſhment, rather than a ſatisfaction. And now ſurely God may complain of us as he did of *Iſrael*, *How long will it be ere you believe me*? Num. 14. 11. After all the atteſtations he has given of his care and Providence over us, after all the experiments we have had of the folly of our own elections, we cannot yet be brought either to diſtruſt our ſelves, or rely upon him. We will ſtill be chuſing, and look on him as no farther concern'd, than as the executioner of our deſigns.

We have a deference to every one beſide Almighty God.

6. This is certainly a ſtrange perverſeneſs, and ſuch as no ſenſible man would be guilty of in any other inſtance. In all our ſecular affairs we truſt thoſe whom we have cauſe to think underſtand them better than our ſelves, and rely upon men in their own faculty. We put our eſtates in the Lawyers hand, our bodies into the Phyſician's, and ſubmit to their advice tho' it be againſt our humor, merely becauſe we account them more competent judges. Yet this deference we cannot be perſwaded to pay to God, but will ſtill be preſcribing to him, and are very angry if his diſpenſations do not exactly anſwer our fancies. And can we offer him a greater affront than thus to diſtruſt him? What is it but interpretatively to deny either his wiſdom, or his goodneſs, or both? and ſo derogate from him in two of his eſſential attributes. For there can be no rational account given by any who believe thoſe, why they ſhould not remit their whole concerns to him. So that the ſhort account is, that in our diſtruſts we either deny him to be a God, or our ſelves to be men, by reſiſting the moſt evident dictates of that reaſon which diſtinguiſhes us from brutes. For certainly there is not in human diſcourſe a more irrefragable Maxim, than that we ought for our own ſakes to reſign our ſelves to him, who we are infallibly ſure, can, and will chuſe better for us, than we for our ſelves.

The light of nature taught Socrates *to pray that God would give what he ſaw fit.*

7. This was ſo apparent by meer natural light, that *Socrates* adviſed men to pray only for bleſſings in general, and leave the particular kinds of them to God's election, who beſt knows what is good for us. And ſure this is ſuch a piece of Divinity, as extremely reproches us Chriſtians, who cannot match a Heathen in his implicit faith to God. Nay indeed 'tis the vileſt defamation upon God himſelf, that we who pretend to know him more, ſhould truſt him leſs. So that we ſee our repinings do not terminate in their own proper guilt, but do in their conſequences ſwell higher, and our diſcontents propagate themſelves into Blaſphemy. For while we impatiently complain of our wants, we do tacitly tax God to want either that wiſdom, power, or love, whereby he ſhould ſupply us. And ſure he muſt be very Atheiſtical to whom this will not give a competent prejudice againſt this ſin.

Our poſitive afflictions are embitter'd by our ſelves.

8. And this very conſideration will equally prejudge the other branch of our diſcontents, I mean thoſe which repine at the ills we ſuffer. And not only our privative, but our poſitive afflictions may by it have their bitterneſs taken off: for the ſame goodneſs and wiſdom which denies thoſe things we like, becauſe they are hurtful for us, do's upon the very ſame reaſon give us thoſe diſtaſtful things which he ſees profitable. A wiſe Phyſician do's not only diet, but if occaſion be, purge his patient alſo. And ſurely there is not ſuch a purifier, ſuch a cleanſer of the ſoul as are afflictions,

if we do not (like diſorderly patients) fruſtrate their efficacy by the irregular managery of our ſelves under them.

SECT. VIII.

Of the Advantage of Afflictions.

The moſt general and obvious advantage of affliction, is its awakening to repentance.

1. IT were the work of a volume to give an exact and minute account of the benefit of afflictions. I ſhall only point at ſome of the more general and obvious. And firſt it is one of the moſt awakening calls to Repentance; and to this end it is that God moſt uſually deſigns it. We ſee the whole ſcene of it, Hoſ. 5. 15. *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledg their offence, and ſeek my face: in their affliction they will ſeek me early*: and in the very next verſe we find this voice of God echoed forth by a penitential note, *Come and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath ſmitten, and he will bind us up.* Thus we find the Brethren of *Joſeph*, tho' there had a long interval paſſed betwixt their barbarous uſage of him, and his feigned rigor to them, yet when they ſaw themſelves diſtreſs'd by the one, then they begin to recollect the other, ſaying; *We are verily guilty concerning our brother*, Gen. 42. 21. Proſperity is an intoxicating thing, and there are few brains ſtrong enough to bear it; it laies us aſleep, and amuſes us with pleaſant dreams, whilſt in the mean time *Satan* rifles our treſures, and ſpoiles us by the deceitful charms of ſin, of our innocency and real happineſs. And can there be a more friendly office done for a man in this condition, than to rouze him, and bring him to apprehend the deſigns that are laid againſt him? And this is the errand on which afflictions are ſent: ſo that we have reaſon to look on them as our friends and confederates that intend our reſcue, and to take the alarm they give us, and diligently ſeek out thoſe inteſtine enemies of which they warn us. And he that inſtead of this quarrels at their interpoſing, thinks them his *enemies becauſe they tell him the truth*, Gal. 4. 6. do's miſerably pervert *the counſel of God againſt himſelf*, Luke 7. 30. and may at laſt verify his own jealouſies; and by ſo provoking an ingratitude, convert thoſe into the wounds of an enemy, which were originally meant as the corrections of a Father.

Therefore they bear the image and impreſs of the guilts they are to chaſtiſe.

2. And as afflictions do thus in general admoniſh us of ſins, ſo it pleaſes God moſt frequently ſo to model and frame them, that they bear the very image and impreſs of thoſe particular guilts they are to chaſtiſe, and are the dark ſhadows that attend our gay delights, or flagrant inſolencies. The wiſe man obſerves that the turning the Egyptian waters into blood, was a manifeſt reproof of that cruel commandment for the murdering of the Hebrew infants, *Wiſd.* 12. 5. And ſurely we might in moſt if not all our ſufferings, ſee ſome ſuch correſponding circumſtances, as may lead us to the immediate provoking cauſe of it. God who do's all things in number, weight, and meaſure, do's in puniſhments alſo obſerve a ſymmetry and proportion, and adapts them not only to the heinouſneſs, but even the very ſpecific kind of our crimes. The only fixt immutable rule he has given for his Vice-gerents on earth to puniſh by, is that in the caſe of murder, which is we ſee grounded on this rule of proportion, *He that ſheddeth mans blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed*, Gen. 9. 6. And tho' he

hath now reſcinded the inferior retaliations of the *eye for the eye, the tooth for the tooth*, Exod. 21. 24. (probably for the hardneſs of our hearts, becauſe he ſaw our revengeful natures would be too much pleaſed with it) yet he has not precluded himſelf from acting by thoſe meſures, but we ſee he do's very often ſignally make men feel the ſmart of thoſe violences or injuſtices they have uſed to others. Of this Sacred ſtory affords ſeveral examples (as *Adonibezek*, Judg. 1. 6. and *Ahab*, 1 Kings 21. 19.) and profane many more, and daily experience and obſervation moſt of all. And tho' this method of retaliation is not alwaies ſo evident and apparent to the world, becauſe mens ſins are not alwaies ſo, yet I believe if men would duly recollect, it would be for the moſt part diſcernable to their own conſciences, and they would apparently ſee, that their calamities did but trace the footſteps of their ſins.

It is of exceeding great importance to be taught, what is the ſin that God has a controverſy with us for.

3. Now if we rightly weigh this, we cannot but think it a very advantageous circumſtance. We are naturally blind when we look inward, and if we have not ſome adventitious light to clear the object, will be very apt to overlook it. Therefore ſince the end of all our afflictions is our repentance, it is a wiſe and gracious diſpoſal, that they do thus point to us thoſe particular ſins of which we are to repent. The body of ſin will not be deſtroy'd in the whole entire bulk, but muſt be diſmembred, pull'd to pieces limb by limb. He that attaques it otherwiſe, will be like *Sertorius*'s ſouldier, who ineffectively tugg'd at the horſes tail to get it off at once, when he that pull'd it hair by hair, quickly did it. Therefore as it is a great part of our ſpiritual Wiſdom to know in what eſpecial parts the *Sampſon*-like ſtrength of our corruptions lie, ſo it is a great inſtance of God's care of us, thus by his corrections to diſcipline and inſtruct us in it.

If the eſtate be impoveriſht, to conſider how it was gain'd, or employ'd; if the body be afflicted, to inquire if it be not the effect of intemperance; if the name be invaded, to reflect whether the ſhame be not deſerv'd, &c.

4. In all our afflictions therefore it is our concern, nicely and critically to obſerve them. I mean not to enhance our murmurs and complaints, but to learn by them what is Gods peculiar controverſy againſt us. This is indeed *to hear the rod, and who hath appointed it*, Mich. 6. 9. Let him therefore that ſuffers in any of his concerns, examine whether he hath not ſome correſponding guilt which anſwers to it, *as face anſwers face*, Prov. 27. 19. He that is impoveriſhed in his Eſtate, let him conſider firſt how he acquired it, whether there were not ſomthing of fraud or injuſtice, which like a cancrous humor, mixt in its very elements and conſtitution, and eat out its bowels: or whether ſome ſacrilegious prize, ſome coal from the altar have not fired his neſt. Or if nothing can be charged upon the acqueſt, let him conſider how he has uſed it; whether he hath not made it the fuel of his luſts, in riot and exceſſes, or the object of his adoration in an inordinate value of it. In like manner he who is afflicted in his Body, groans under the torment of ſome grievous diſeaſe, may very ſeaſonably interrogate himſelf, whether it have not bin contracted by his vice, whether *his bones be not* (in a more literal ſenſe than *Job* meant it) *full of the ſins of his youth*, Job 20. 11. and his ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs be not the cauſe, *that his ſoul*, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *abhors all manner of meat, and is even hard at deaths door*, Pſal. 107. 18. or at leaſt whether the not employing his health and ſtrength to thoſe purpoſes for which 'twas given, is not the reaſon of its being withdrawn. He alſo that is invaded in his Reputation, that lies under ſome great infamy, is to conſider whether it be not deſerv'd; whether ſome part if not the whole guilt of which he is accuſed, ſtick not to him: or if he be clear in that particular inſtance, whether ſome conceled ſin of his would not if it were known, incur as great ſcandal: for in that caſe he has in right forfeited his reputation, and God

may make the ſeizure as well by an unjuſt, as a juſt accuſation. Or if his heart accuſe him not here, yet let him farther reflect, whether his vainglorious purſuits of praiſe and high conceits of himſelf, have not made this an apt and neceſſary humiliation for him. Or laſtly let him recollect how he has behaved himſelf towards others in this kind: whether he hath had a juſt tenderneſs of his neighbors fame, or hath not rather expoſed and proſtituted it. In theſe and many other inſtances ſuch a particular ſcrutiny, would (in all probability) diſcover the affinity and cognation between our guilts and our puniſhments, and by marking out the ſpring and fountain head, direct us how to ſtop or divert the current. And he that would diligently employ himſelf in this inquiſition, would find little leiſure and leſs cauſe to condole his afflictions, but would divert all his complaints upon himſelf, *accept of the puniſhment of his iniquity, and thank the Lord for thus giving him warning*, Pſal. 16. 8.

Afflictions benefit us by weaning us from the world.

5. A ſecond benefit which God deſigns us in our afflictions is the weaning us from the world, to diſentangle us from its fetters and charms, and draw us to himſelf. We read in the ſtory of the *Deluge*, that ſo long as the earth was covered with waters, the very *Raven* was contented to take ſhelter in the Ark, but when all was fair and dry, even the *Dove* finally forſook it, *Gen.* 8. 12. And 'tis much ſo with us: the worſt of men will commonly in diſtreſſes have recourſe to God (the very heathen mariners in a ſtorm could rebuke *Jonah* for not calling upon his God, *Jon.* 1. 6.) when yet the very beſt of us, are apt to forget him amidſt the blandiſhments and inſinuations of proſperity. The kind aſpects of the world are very enchanting, apt to inveigle and beſot us, and therefore it is Gods care over us, to let us ſometimes ſee her more averting countenance in her frowns and ſtorms; that, as children frighted by ſome ugly appearance, we may run into the arms of our father. Alas were all things exactly fitted to our humors here, when ſhould we think of a remove? and had not death ſome harbingers to prepare us for him, what a ſurpriſing gueſt would he be to us? 'Tis ſtoried of *Antigonus*, that ſeeing a ſouldier in his camp of ſo daring a courage, that he alwaies courted the moſt hazardous attemts, and obſerving him alſo of a very infirm ſickly habit, he took a particular care of him, and by medicines and good attendance recovered him; which no ſooner he had done, but the man grew more cautious, and would no longer expoſe himſelf as formerly; and gave this reaſon for it, that now he was healthy, his life was of ſome value to him, and not to be hazarded at the ſame rate, as when it was only a burden: and ſhould God cure all our complaints, render us perfectly at eaſe, I fear too many of us would be of the ſouldiers mind, think our lives too good to reſign to him, much more to hazard for him, as our Chriſtianity in many caſes obliges us. The ſon of *Syrach* obſerves how *dreadful death is to a man that is at reſt in his poſſeſſions, that hath abundance of all things, and hath nothing to vex him*: nay he deſcends much lower; and puts in him *who is yet able to receive meat*, Ecclus. 14. 1. The truth is we do ſo paſſionately dote upon the world, that like beſotted lovers, we can bear a great deal of ill uſage, before we quit our purſuit. Any little ſlight favor atones us after multiplied affronts, and we muſt be diſciplined by repeted diſappointments, ere we can withdraw our confidence. But how fatally ſecure ſhould we be, if God ſhould permit this Syren alwaies to entertain us with her muſic, and ſhould not by ſome diſcordant grating notes interrupt our raptures, and recall us to ſober thoughts.

This vouchſafement is ſo much the greater, in that the love of the world was a violation of the baptiſmal vow.

6. Indeed 'tis one of the higheſt inſtances of God's love, and of his clemency alſo, thus to project our reducement. We were all in our Baptiſm affianc'd to him, with a particular abrenunciation of the world, ſo that we cannot without the greateſt diſloyalty caſt our ſelves into its embraces; and yet when we have thus *broken the covenant of God*, Prov. 2. 17. he do's not purſue us with a jealous rage, with the ſeverity which an abuſed rival'd kindneſs would ſuggeſt; doth not give us a bill of divorce and diſclame his relation; but contrives how he may reclame and bring us back to himſelf. The tranſcendency of this lenity God excellently deſcribes by the Prophet in the caſe of *Iſrael, They ſay if a man put away his wife, and ſhe become another man's, ſhall he return unto her again? but thou haſt play'd the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me ſaith the Lord*, Jer. 3. 1. And this tho' a great height of indulgence, is no more than he daily repetes to us. After we have baſely adulterated with the world, converted our affections from God to it, he do's not give us over, abandon us to our leud courſe, and conſequent ruin, but ſtill invites our return; and leſt that may not ſerve, he do's with a great deal of holy artifice eſſay to break that accurſed League into which we are enter'd, pulls off the diſguiſe in which the world courted us, and makes us ſee it as it is in it ſelf, a ſcene of *vanity and vexatiou of ſpirit*, Eccleſ. 1. 14.

'Tis obſervable thoſe things are generally ſooneſt taken away which men are moſt fond of.

7. And as he do's this in general, ſo alſo by a particular application to thoſe temporal ſatisfactions wherewith we were moſt tranſported; the things to which we are more indifferent do not ſo much endanger us, 'tis thoſe upon which we have more vehemently ſet our hearts which become our ſnares, and awake his jealouſy; and accordingly we frequently ſee that 'tis in thoſe he chuſes to croſs us. How often do's it happen that thoſe which are enamoured of themſelves, dote upon their own features, do meet with ſome diſeaſe or accident which blaſts their beauty, withers that fair flower, and makes their winter overtake their ſpring? So in our friends and relations 'tis uſually ſeen, we ſooneſt looſe thoſe for whom we have the greateſt, the moſt immoderate paſſion. If there be one fondling among our children, 'tis odds but that is taken away, or made as much the object of our grief and ſorrow, as ever it was of our joy and love. When God ſees our hearts ſo exceſſively cleave to any tranſitory thing, he knows 'tis neceſſary to ſever them: for whilſt we have ſuch clogs upon us, *our ſouls will cleave to the duſt*, Pſal. 119. 1. will not be able to ſoar up to the higher region for which they are deſign'd.

And thoſe are generally the moſt hurtful things.

8. In a word, God ſo loves us, that he removes what ever he ſees will obſtruct that intimate union which he deſires with us: and ſure this is ſo obliging, that tho' he ſhould bid us to our loſs, tho' he could not recompence us for what he takes from us, yet we muſt be very ill natur'd if we can be angry at ſo much kindneſs. But when to this is added that all this is principally, nay ſolely deſign'd for our advantage, that God takes from us all theſe emty deluſory contentments merely that he may inſtate us in ſolid and durable joys; we betray as much ignorance of our intereſt, as inſenſibleneſs of our obligation, if we repine that God makes us ſo much his care. 'Tis true indeed, the things to which we have ſo inordinately adhered, do ſtick ſo cloſe, that they cannot be pull'd away without ſome pain: yet for our corporal ſecurity we can endure the ſundring of parts that do not only cleave, but grow to us. He that has a gangren'd member ſuffers it to be cut off to ſave his whole body; and do's not revile, but thank and reward the Chirurgion. Yet where our ſouls are concern'd, and where the things have no native union with us, but are only cemented by our paſſions,

we are impatient of the method, and think God deals very hardly with us, not to let us periſh with what we love. The ſum of all is this, God tho' he be abundantly condeſcending, yet he will never ſtoop ſo low as to ſhare his intereſt with us in the world: if we will devote our ſelves to it, 'tis not all our emty forms of ſervice will ſatisfy him: if he cannot divorce our hearts from it, he will divorce himſelf eternally from us. And the caſe being thus, we are ſure very ill adviſed if we do not contentedly reſign our ſelves to his methods, and chearfully endure them how ſharp ſoever. The only expedient we have for our own eaſe, is to ſhorten the cure by giving our aſſiſtance, and not by ſtruglings to render it more difficult and painful. Let us entirely ſurrender our wills to him, and when we have done that, we may without much pain let him take any thing elſe. But the more difficult we find it to be diſentangled from the world, the greater ſhould our caution be againſt all future engagements to it. If our eſcape hath bin as the Apoſtle ſaies, *ſo as by fire*, Jude 23. with much ſmart and hazard, let us at leaſt have ſo much wit, as the common proverb allows children, and not again expoſe our ſelves: let us never glue our hearts to any external thing, but let all the concerns of the world hang looſe about us: by that means we ſhall be able to put them off inſenſibly when ever God calls for them, or perhaps we ſhall prevent his calling for them at all, it being for the moſt part our too cloſe adheſion to them which promts him to it.

Afflictions have a farther advantage, that they are a mark of adoption.

9. A third advantage of afflictions is, that it is a mark and ſignature of our adoption, a witneſs of our legitimation. *What ſon is he* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *whom the Father chaſtiſeth not? but if ye be without chaſtiſement whereof all are partakers, then are ye baſtards and not ſons*, Heb. 12.7, 8. *Jacob* clad his dearling *Joſeph* in a party-coloured Coat, and God's favorites do here wear a Livery inter-woven with a mixture of dark and gloomy colours; their *long white robes* are laid up for them againſt they come to the *marriage of the Lamb*, Rev. 19.7. Indeed we much miſtake the deſign of Chriſtianity, if we think it calls us to a condition of eaſe and ſecurity. It might ſuit well enough with the votaries of the Golden Calf, to *ſit down to eat and drink, and riſe up to play*, Exod. 32. 6. but the diſciples of the crucified Savior are train'd to another diſcipline, our profeſſion enters us into a ſtate of warfare: and accordingly our very Baptiſmal engagement runs all in military terms, and we are not only ſervants of Chriſt's family, but ſouldiers of his camp. Now we know in a war men muſt not expect to paſs their time in eaſe and ſoftneſs, but beſides all the dangers and difficulties of the combat, have many other hardſhips to endure; hunger and thirſt, heat and cold, hard lodgings and weary marches: and he that is too nice for thoſe, will not long ſtick to his colors. And it is the ſame in our Spiritual warfare, many preſſures and ſufferings are annexed to it, and our paſſive valor is no leſs tried than our active. In reſpect of this it is that our Savior admoniſhes his Proſelytes to compute firſt the difficulties incident to their profeſſion, and that he may not enſnare us by propoſing too eaſy terms, he bids us reckon upon the worſt, and tells us, that he *that forſakes not all that he hath, ſhall not be his diſciple*, Luke 14.26. and *that we muſt thro' much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*, Acts 14. 22. Indeed 'twere very abſurd for us to expect eaſier conditions, when theſe are the ſame to which our Leader has ſubmitted, the *Captain of our Salvation was perfected by ſufferings*, Heb. 2. 10. and if *it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer before he enter'd into his glory*, Luke 24. 46. it were inſolent madneſs for us to look to be carried thither upon our beds of Ivory, or from the noiſe of our harps and viols, be immediately rapt into the Choire of Angels.

On this account pious men have ſtill lookt upon proſperity with fear and jealouſy.

10. This has bin ſo much conſider'd by pious men, that they have lookt upon their ſecular proſperities with fear and jealouſy, and many have ſolemnly petition'd for croſſes, as thinking them the neceſſary atteſtation of their ſonſhip, and means of aſſimilation to their elder Brother. Why then ſhould that which was ſo deſirable to them, appear ſo formidable to us? or why ſhould we ſo vehemently deprecate, what they ſo earneſtly invited? If we indeed think it a privilege to be the Sons of God and fellow-heirs with Chriſt, why do we grudge at the condition? The *Roman* Captain tells St. *Paul* that he obtained the immunities of a *Roman with a great ſum*, Acts 22. 28. and ſhall we expect ſo much a nobler and more advantageous adoption perfectly *gratis*, look that God ſhould change his whole œconomy for our cauſe, give us an eternal inheritance diſcharged of thoſe temporal incumbrances himſelf has annexed to it? This were ſure as unjuſt a hope as it would be a vain one. When *David* had that enſnaring propoſal made him of being the Kings ſon in law, 1 *Sam.* 18. 21. he ſet ſuch a value upon the dignity, that he deſpiſed the difficulty of the condition: and ſure we muſt have very low abject ſouls, if when ſo infinitly a higher advancement is ſincerely offer'd us, we can ſuffer any apprehenſion of hardſhip to divert us. In a word let us remember that of the Apoſtle, *If we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with him*, 2 Tim. 2. 12. And tho' our afflictions be in themſelves not joyous but grievous, yet when they are conſider'd as the earneſt of our future inheritance, they put on another face, and may rather enamour than fright us.

Afflictions incite compaſſion.

11. A fourth advantage of afflictions is, that they excite our compaſſions towards others: there is nothing qualifies us ſo rightly to eſtimate the ſufferings of others, as the having our ſelves felt them: without this our apprehenſions of them are as dull and confuſed, as a blind man of color, or a deaf man of ſounds. They *that ſtretch themſelves upon their couches, that eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calve's out of the midſt of the ſtall: that chaunt to the ſound of the viol, drink wine in bowls, and anoint themſelves with the chief ointments, will not much be grieved with the afflictions of Joſeph*, Am. 6. 4, 5, 6. Nay ſo neceſſary is our experience towards our commiſeration, that we ſee 'twas thought a requiſite accompliſhment of our high Prieſt, (that higheſt example of unbounded compaſſion) and therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, *It behoved him in all things to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high Prieſt in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people, for in that he himſelf hath ſuffer'd being temted, he is able to ſuccour them that are temted*, Heb. 2. 17, 18. But if he whoſe mere ſenſe of our miſeries brought him down to us, choſe this expedient to advance his pity, how neceſſary is it to our petrified bowels? And ſince God has aſſign'd our mercies to our brethren, as the ſtandard by which he will proportion his to us, 'tis more ours than their advantage to have them enlarged: ſo that when by making us taſt of their cup, acquainting us with the bitter reliſh of their ſufferings, he prepares us to a Chriſtian ſympathy with them, 'tis but a remoter way of obliging and qualifying us for a more ample portion of his mercy. Nay beſides the profit there is an honor accrues to us by it; compaſſion is one of the beſt properties of our nature, and we unman our ſelves when we put it off; nay more, 'tis an Attribute of the Divinity, and the more we advance in it, the cloſer approches we make to him. And therefore we have all reaſon to bleſs him for that diſcipline by which he promotes us in ſo excellent, ſo neceſſary a grace.

Afflictions improve devotion.

12. A fifth benefit of afflictions, is that it is an improvement of devotion, ſets us with more heartineſs to our prayers. Whilſt proſperity flows in upon us, we bathe our ſelves in its ſtreams, but are very apt to forget its ſource; ſo that God is fain to ſtop the current, leave us dry and parched that our needs may make us do what our gratitude would not, trace our bleſſings up to the original ſpring, and both acknowledge and invoke him as the Author of all our good. This effect of afflictions is obſerv'd by the Prophet, *Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chaſtning was upon them,* Iſa. 26. 16. And I believe I may appeal to every mans experience whether his prayers be not more frequent and more hearty too, when he is under ſome diſtreſs. Then how importunate are we in our petitions? how profuſe in our vows and promiſes? ſaying with *Iſrael, Deliver us only, we pray thee, this day: and they put away the ſtrange Gods from among them, and ſerved the Lord,* Judg. 10. 15, 16. I confeſs 'tis no good indication of our temper that we need thus to be put in the preſs ere we will yield any thing, yet ſince we are ſo diſingenuous, 'tis a mercy in God to adapt his methods to us; to extort when we will not give, and if he can have no free-will offering, yet at leaſt to exact his tribute. Nor do's he deſign the effect of this ſhould ceaſe with the calamity that rais'd it, but expects our compell'd addreſſes ſhould bring us into the way of voluntary ones, and happily enſnare us into piety. And indeed herein are we worſe than brutiſh if it do's not. We think it a barbarous rudeneſs to engage a man in our affairs, and as ſoon as we have ſerved our own turns, never take farther notice of him. Nay indeed the very beaſts may lecture us in this piece of Morality, many of them paying a ſignal gratitude where they have receiv'd, and ſhall we not come up at leaſt to their pitch? ſhall not the endearment of our deliverance bring our deliverer into ſome repute and conſideration with us, and make us deſire to keep up an acquaintance and entercourſe with him? Yet if ingenuity work not with us, let intereſt at leaſt prevail, and the remembrance how ſoon we may need him again, admoniſh us not to make our ſelves ſtrangers to him. God complains of *Iſrael, wherefore ſay my people, we are Lords? we will come no more at thee,* Iſa. 2. 31. A very inſolent folly to renounce that dependance by which alone they ſubſiſted, and no leſs will it be in any of us if we ſtop our recourſe to him, becauſe we have had advantage by it. We have no aſſurance that the ſame occaſion ſhall not recur, but with what face can we then reſume that entercourſe which in the interval we deſpiſed? So that if we have but any ordinary providence, we ſhall ſtill ſo celebrate paſt reſcues as to continue in a capacity of begging more, and then we cannot but alſo confeſs the benefit of thoſe firſt calamities which inſpired our devotion, and taught us to pray in earneſt, and will be aſhamed that our thanks ſhould be utter'd in a fainter accent than our petitions; or our daily ſpiritual concerns ſhould be more coldly ſollicited than our temporal accidental ones.

Afflictions improve Chriſtian graces.

13. Nor is it only our devotion that is thus improved by our diſtreſſes, but many other Graces; our Faith, our Hope, our Patience, our Chriſtian Sufferance and Fortitude. It is no triumph of Faith to truſt God for thoſe good things which he gives us in hand, this is rather to walk by ſenſe than Faith: but to rely on him in the greateſt deſtitution, *and againſt hope to believe in hope*; this is the Faith of a true child of *Abraham*, and will *be imputed* to us (as it was to him) *for righteouſneſs*, Rom. 4. 23. So alſo our Patience owes all its opportunities of exerciſe to our afflictions, and conſequently owes alſo a great part of its being to them; for we know deſuetude will loſe habits. What imaginable uſe is there of patience, where there is nothing

thing to ſuffer? In our proſperous ſtate, we may indeed employ our temperance, our humility, our caution; but patience ſeems then a uſeleſs vertue: nay indeed for ought we know may be counterfeit, till adverſity bring it to the teſt. And yet this is the moſt glorious accompliſhment of a Chriſtian, that which moſt eminently conforms him to the Image of his Savior, whoſe whole life was a perpetual exerciſe of this grace; and therefore we love our eaſe too well if we are unwilling to buy this pearl at any price.

Afflictions teach to be thankful both for paſt benefits, and even incumbent preſſures.

14. Laſtly our Thankfulneſs is (at leaſt ought to be) increas'd by our diſtreſſes. 'Tis very natural for us to reflect with value and eſteem upon thoſe bleſſings we have loſt, and we too often do it to aggravate our diſcontent: but ſure the more rational uſe of it is to raiſe our thankfulneſs for the time wherein we enjoy'd them. Nay not only our former enjoyments, but even our preſent deprivations deſerve our gratitude, if we conſider the happy advantages we may reap from them. If we will perverſly caſt them away, that unworthy contemt paies no ſcores; for we ſtill ſtand anſwerable in God's account for the good he deſign'd and we might have had by it, and we become liable to a new charge for our ingratitude in thus *deſpiſing the chaſtiſement of the Lord*, Heb. 12. 5.

Secular miſfortunes have bin the paſſage to ſucceeding felicities.

15. And now if all theſe benefits of afflictions (which are yet but imperfectly recited) may be thought worth conſidering, it cannot but reconcile us to the ſharpeſt of God's methods; unleſs we will own our ſelves ſuch mere animals, as to have no other apprehenſions than what our bodily ſenſes convey to us; for ſure he that has reaſon enough to underſtand that he has an immortal ſoul, cannot but aſſent that its intereſts ſhould be ſerv'd, tho' with the diſplacency of his fleſh. Yet even in regard of that our murmurings are oft very unjuſt; for we do many times ignorantly prejudge Gods deſign towards us even in temporals, who frequently makes a little tranſient uneaſineſs the paſſage to ſecular felicities. *Moſes* when he fled out of *Egypt*, probably little thought that he ſhould return thither a *God unto Pharaoh*, Exod. 4. 16. and as little did *Joſeph* when he was brought thither a ſlave, that he was to be a Ruler there: yet as diſtant as thoſe ſtates were, the Divine Providence had ſo connected them, that the one depends upon the other. And certainly we may often obſerve the like over-ruling hand in our own diſtreſſes, that thoſe events which we have entertained with the greateſt regret, have in the conſequences bin very beneficial to us.

Be afflictions what they can be, they in ſome reſpect or other are deſign'd for good.

16. To conclude, we have certainly both from ſpeculation and experience abundant matter to calm all our diſquiets, to ſatisfy our diſtruſts, and to fix in us an entire reſignation to God's diſpoſals, who has deſigns which we cannot penetrate, but none which we need fear, unleſs we our ſelves pervert them. We have our Savior's word for it, that *he will not give us a ſtone when we ask bread, nor a ſcorpion when we ask a fiſh*, Matt. 7. 9. Nay his love ſecures us yet farther from the errors of our own wild choice, and do's not give us thoſe ſtones and ſcorpions which we importune for. Let us then leave our concerns to him who beſt knows them, and make it our ſole care to entertain his diſpenſations with as much ſubmiſſion and duty, as he diſpences them with love and wiſdom. And if we can but do ſo, we may dare all the power of earth and hell too to make us miſerable: for be our afflictions what they can, we are ſure they are but what we in ſome reſpect or other need; be they privative or poſitive, the want of what we wiſh, or the ſuffering of what we wiſh not, they are the diſpoſals of him who cannot err, and we ſhall finally have cauſe to ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *It is good for me that I have bin afflicted*, Pſalm 119. 71.

SECT.

Sect. IX.

Of our Miſfortunes compar'd with other mens.

No man can reaſonably think himſelf more unhappy than his neighbour.

1. WE come now to impreſs an equally juſt and uſeful conſideration, the comparing our miſfortunes with thoſe of other mens: and he that do's that, will certainly ſee ſo little cauſe to think himſelf ſingular, that he will not find himſelf ſuperlative in calamity; for there is no man living that can with reaſon affirm himſelf to be the very unhappieſt man, there being innumerable diſtreſſes of others which he knows not of, and conſequently cannot bring them in balance with his own. A multitude of men there are whoſe perſons he knows not, and even of thoſe he do's, he may be much a ſtranger to their diſtreſſes; many ſorrows may lie at the heart of him who carries a ſmiling face, and many a man has bin an object of envy to thoſe who look but on the ſurface of his ſtate, who yet to thoſe who know his private griefs, appears more worthy of compaſſion. And ſure this confuſed uncertain eſtimate of other mens afflictions, may divert us from all loud out-cries of our own. *Solon* ſeeing a friend much oppreſt with grief, carried him up to a Town that overlookt the City of *Athens*, and ſhewing him all the buildings, ſaid to him, Conſider how many ſorrows have, do, and ſhall in future ages, inhabit under all thoſe roofs, and do not vex thy ſelf with thoſe inconveniences which are common to mortality, as if they were only yours. And ſure 'twas good advice: for ſuffering is almoſt as inſeparable an adjunct of our nature, as dying is: yet we do not ſee men very apt to imbitter their whole lives by the fore-ſight that they muſt die, but ſeeing it a thing as univerſal as inevitable, they are more forward to take up the Epicures reſolution, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die*, 1 Cor. 15. 32. And why ſhould we not look upon afflictions alſo as the common lot of humanity, and as we take the advantages, ſo be content to bear the incumbrances of that ſtate?

Other mens equal ſhare in calamity, is not only a poſſibility, but often a viſible certainty.

2. But beſides that implicite allowance that is thus to be made for the unknown calamities of others, if we ſurvey but thoſe that lie open and viſible to us, the moſt of us ſhall find enough to diſcountenance our complaints. Who is there that when he has moſt ſtudiouſly recollected his miſeries, may not find ſome or other that apparently equals, if not exceeds him? He that ſtomacks his own being contemn'd and ſlighted, may ſee another perſecuted and oppreſt. He that groans under ſome ſharp pains, may ſee another afflicted with ſharper: and even he that has the moſt acute torments in his body, may ſee another more ſadly cruciated by the agonies of his mind. So that if we would but look about us, we ſhould ſee ſo many forreign occaſions of our pity, that we ſhould be aſham'd to confine it wholly to our ſelves.

The remarkably unhappy are the leſs number of men: but 'tis for little things moſt men complain.

3. It will perhaps be ſaid that this cannot be univerſally true, for that there muſt in comparative degrees be ſome loweſt ſtate of miſery: I grant it, but ſtill that ſtate conſiſts not in ſuch an indiviſible point, that any one perſon can have the incloſure; or if it do, 'twill be ſo hard for any to diſcern who that one perſon is, that I need deſire no fairer a compoſition, than to have every man ſuſpend his repinings, till he can evince his title. But alas there are but few that can make any approches to ſuch a pretence: for tho' if we advert to mens complaints, we ſhould think all degrees of compariſon were confounded, and every man were equally the greateſt

ſufferer; yet certainly in the truth of things 'tis nothing ſo: for (not to repete what was before mention'd, that probably no man is miſerable in any proportion to the utmoſt degree of poſſibility) the remarkably unhappy are far the leſs number. And how paſſionatly ſoever men exaggerate their calamities, yet perhaps in their ſober mood, they will ſcarce change ſtates with thoſe whom they profeſs to think more happy than themſelves. It was the ſaying of *Socrates*, that if there were a common bank made of all mens troubles, moſt men would rather chuſe to take thoſe they brought, than to venture upon a new dividend. And indeed he had reaſon for his ſuppoſition; for conſidering how great a part of many mens afflictions are of their own making, fictitious and imaginary, they may juſtly fear leaſt they ſhould exchange feathers for lead, their own emty ſhadows for the real and preſſing calamities of others, and cannot but think it beſt to ſit down with their own, which ſerves their declamations as well, and their eaſe much better. We oft ſee men at a little miſ-ſhaping of a garment, a ſcarce diſcernable error in their cook, or their ſhorteſt interruption in their ſports, in ſuch tranſport of trouble, as if they were the moſt unfortunate men in the world; yet for all that you ſhall hardly perſwade them to change with him whoſe coarſe cloathing ſuperſedes all care of the faſhion, whoſe appetite was never diſappointed for want of ſawce, and whoſe perpetual toil makes him inſenſible what the defeat of ſport ſignifies.

We know the utmoſt of the ills we ſuffer, and would not willingly change our condition with another.

4. Nay even where the exchange ſeems more equal, where the afflictions are on both ſides ſolid and ſubſtantial, yet a prudent man would ſcarce venture upon the barter. 'Tis no ſmall advantage to know what we have to conteſt with, to have experimented the worſt of its attaques, by which we become better able to guard our ſelves: but a new evil comes with the force of a ſurpriſe, and finds us open and diſarmed. It is indeed almoſt a miraculous power that cuſtom has in reconciling us to things otherwiſe diſpleaſing; all our ſenſes are thought to remit of their averſion by familiarity with ungrateful objects: that ugly form which at firſt makes us ſtart, by us diveſts its terror, and we reconcile our ſelves to harſh ſounds and ill reliſhes by long cuſtom. And ſure it has the very ſame effect upon our minds: the moſt fierce calamities do by acquaintance grow more tractable; ſo that he that exchanges an old one for a new, do's but bring a wild Lion into his houſe inſtead of a tame: it may for ought he knows immediatly tear him in pieces, but at leaſt muſt coſt him a great deal of pains to render it gentle and familiar, and certainly no wiſe man would wiſh to make ſuch a bargain.

Affliction is like a public Tax, a ſhare in which every one muſt be content to bear.

5. By all this it appears that how extravagantly ſoever we aggravate our own calamities and extenuate other mens, we dare not upon recollection ſtand to our own eſtimate: and what can be ſaid more in prejudice of our diſcontent? 'Tis a granted maxim, that every man muſt have afflictions. *Man that is born of a woman*, ſaies *Job, is of few years and full of trouble*, Job 13.4. and we muſt reverſe Gods fundamental law, before we can hope for a total exemption. All that any man can aſpire to, is to have but an equal ſhare with others, and the generality of men have ſo, at leaſt none can prove he has not ſo; and till he can, his murmurs will ſure be very unjuſtifiable, eſpecially when they have this convincing circumſtance againſt them, that he dares not upon ſober thoughts change his afflictions with moſt of his neighbors. He is an ill member of community, who in publick aſſeſſments would ſhuffle off all paiments: and he is no better who in this common tax God has laid upon our nature, is not content to bear his ſhare.

6. And

'Tis injuſtice and partiality to expect to be exemted.

6. And truly would we but conſider that in all our ſufferings nothing befals us but what is common to our kind, nay which is extremely exceeded by many within the verge of our own obſervation, we muſt be ſenſeleſly partial to be impatient. The Apoſtle thought it a competent conſolation for the firſt Chriſtians, that *there had no temtation befallen them but what was common to men*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. and we betray very extravagant opinions of our ſelves if it be not ſo to us. Indeed 'twas ſcarce poſſible for us to be ſo unſatisfied, as the greateſt part of us are, did we in the comparing our ſelves with others, proceed with any tolerable ingenuity.

The common way of comparing conditions, is fallacious.

7. But alas we are very fallacious and deceitful in the point, we do not compare the good of others with our good, nor their evil with our evil; but with an envious curioſity we amaſs together all the deſirable circumſtances of our neighbors condition, and with as prying diſcontent we ranſack all our grievances, and confront to them. This is ſo unſincere a way of proceeding, as the moſt ordinary underſtanding can detect. If I ſhould wager that my arm were longer than another mans, and for trial meaſure my arm with his finger, he muſt be ſtupidly ſilly, that ſhould award for me; and yet this were not a groſſer cheat, than that which we put upon our ſelves in our compariſons with others. And 'tis a little ſtrange to obſerve unto what various purpoſes we can apply this one thin piece of Sophiſtry: for when we compare our neighbours and our ſelves in point of Morality, we do but reverſe the fallacy, and preſently make his vices as much exceed ours, as our calamities did his in the other inſtance. They are indeed both great violences to reaſon and juſtice, yet the later is ſure the pleaſanter kind of deceit. A man has ſome joy in thinking himſelf leſs wicked than his neighbor, but what imaginable comfort can he take in thinking himſelf more miſerable! Certainly he that would ſubmit to a couſenage, had much better ſhift the ſcene, and think his ſufferings leſs than they are, rather than more; for ſince opinion is the thing that uſually ſets an edge upon our calamities, it might be a profitable deceit that could ſteal that from us.

We take glittering miſery for real happineſs.

8. But we need not blindfold our ſelves if we would but uſe our eyes aright, and ſee things in their true ſhapes; and if we did thus, what a ſtrange turn would there be in the common eſtimates of the world? How many of the guilded troubles of greatneſs, which men at a diſtance look on with ſo much admiration and deſire, would then be as much contemned as now they are courted? A competency would then get the better of abundance, and the now envied pomp of Princes, when balanced with the cares and hazards annext, would be ſo far from a bait, that men like *Saul* 1 *Sam.* 10. 22. would *hide themſelves* from the preferment; and he that underſtood the weight, would rather chuſe to weild a Flail than a Scepter; yet ſo childiſhly are we beſotted with the glittering appearance of things, that we conclude felicity muſt needs dwell where there is a magnificent Portico, and being poſſeſt with this fancy we over-look her in our own humble Cottages, where ſhe would more conſtantly reſide, if ſhe could but find us at home: but we are commonly engaged in a rambling purſuit of her where ſhe is ſeldomeſt to be found, and in the interim miſs of her at our own door.

While we admire the falſe enjoyments of others, we contemn our own real bleſſings.

9. Indeed there is ſcarce a greater folly or unhappineſs incident to mans nature, than this fond admiration of other mens enjoyments, and contemt of our own. And whilſt we have that humor, it will ſupplant not only our preſent, but all poſſibilities of our future content. For tho' we could draw to our ſelves all thoſe things for which we envy others, we ſhould have no

ſooner made them our own, than they will grow deſpicable and nauſeous to us. This is a ſpeculation which has bin atteſted by innumerable experiments, there being nothing more frequent, than to ſee men with impatient eagerneſs, nay often with extreme hazards purſue thoſe acqueſts, which when they have them, they are immediatly ſick of. There is ſcarce any man that may not give himſelf inſtances of this in his own particular: and yet ſo fatally ſtupid are we, that no defeats will diſcipline us, or take us off from theſe falſe eſtimates of other mens happineſſes. And truly while we ſtate our compariſons ſo unequally, they are as miſchievous as the common proverb ſpeaks them odious; but if we could begin at the right end, and look with as much compaſſion on the adverſities of our brethren, as we do with envy on their proſperities, every man would find cauſe to ſit down contentedly with his own burden, and confeſs that he bears but the proportionable ſhare of his common nature, unleſs perhaps it be where ſome extraordinary demerits of his own have added to the weight; and in that caſe he has more reaſon to admire his afflictions are ſo few, than ſo many. And certainly every man knows ſo many more ills by himſelf, than it is poſſible for him to do by another, that he that really ſees himſelf exceed others in his ſufferings, will find cauſe enough to think he do's in ſins alſo.

The Patriarchs and other great examples of vertue in Scripture had great domeſtic misfortunes.

10. But if we ſtretch the compariſon beyond our contemporaries, and look back to the generations of old, we ſhall have yet farther cauſe to acknowledge Gods great indulgence to us. *Abraham* tho' the friend of God, was not exemted from ſevere trials; he was firſt made to wander from his Country, and betake himſelf to a kind of vagrant life, was a long time ſuſpended from the bleſſing of his deſired off-ſpring; and when at laſt his beloved *Iſaac* was obtained, it cauſed a domeſtic jarre, which he was fain to compoſe by the expulſion of *Iſhmael* tho' his ſon alſo. But what a conteſt may we think there was in his own bowels when that rigorous task was impoſed on him of ſacrificing his *Iſaac*? and tho' his faith gloriouſly triumpht over it, yet ſure there could not be a greater preſſure upon human nature. *David* the man after Gods own heart is no leſs ſignal for his afflictions than for his piety: he was for a great while an exile from his Country, and (which he moſt bewailed) from the Sanctuary by the perſecutions of *Saul*: and after he was ſettled in that throne to which Gods immediate aſſignation had intitled him, what a ſucceſſion of calamities had he in his own family? the inceſtuous rape of his Daughter, the retaliation of that by the as unnatural murder of *Amnon*, and that ſeconded by another no leſs barbarous conſpiracy of *Abſolom* againſt himſelf; his expulſion from *Jeruſalem*, the baſe revilings of *Shimei*, and finally the loſs of that dearling ſon in the act of his ſin. A cluſter of afflictions in compariſon whereof the moſt of ours are but like the *gleanings* (as the Prophet ſpeaks) *after the vintage is done*. It were indeed endleſs to inſtance in all the ſeveral Fore-fathers of our Faith before *Chriſt*'s Incarnation: the Apoſtle gives us a brief, but very comprehenſive compendium of their ſufferings, *They had trial of cruel mockings and ſcourgings*; *yea moreover, of bonds and impriſonments*: *they were ſtoned, were ſawn aſunder, were temted, were ſlain with the ſword: they wandred about in ſheep-skins, and goat-skins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented: they wandred in deſerts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth*, Heb. 11. 36, 37, 38. And if we look on the Primitive Chriſtians, we ſhall ſee them perfectly the counterpart to them, their priviledges conſiſted not in any immunities from calamities; for their whole lives were ſcenes of ſufferings. St. *Paul* give us an account of

his own, *in labors more abundant, in ſtripes above meſure, in priſons more frequent, in deaths oft: of the Jews five times received I forty ſtripes ſave one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I ſtoned, thrice I ſuffer'd ſhipwrack, a night and a day have I bin in the deep, in journeying often,* &c. 2 Cor. 11.23. and if his ſingle hardſhips roſe thus high, what may we think the whole ſum of all his fellow-laborers amounted to together, with that noble Army of Martyrs, who ſeal'd their faith with their blood; of whoſe ſufferings *Eccleſiaſtic* hiſtory gives us ſuch aſtoniſhing relations?

Above all, the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, our Lord Jeſus, was exercis'd in ſufferings.

11. And now *being compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes,* the Apoſtle's inference is very irrefragable, *let us run with patience the race which is ſet before us,* Heb. 12.1,2. But yet it is more ſo, if we proceed on to that conſideration he adjoins, *Looking unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our faith, who for the joy that was ſet before him, endur'd the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame.* Indeed if we contemplate him in the whole courſe of his life, we ſhall find him rightly ſtiled by the Prophet *a man of ſorrows,* Iſa. 53.3. And as if he had charged himſelf with all our griefs as well as our ſins, there is ſcarce any human calamity which we may not find exemplified in him. Do's any complain of the lowneſs and poverty of his condition? Alas his whole life was a ſtate of indigence: he was forced to be an inmate with the beaſts, be laid in a ſtable at his birth, and after himſelf profeſſes that he *had no where to lay his head,* Luke 9.58. Is any oppreſt with infamy and reproch? he may ſee his Savior accuſed as a *glutton and a wine-bibber,* Luke 7. 34. *a Blaſphemer,* John 10.33. *a Sorcerer,* Matt. 12.24. *a perverter of the nation,* Luke 23.2. Yea to ſuch a ſordid lowneſs had they ſunk his repute, that a ſeditious thief and murderer was thought the more eligible perſon, *not this man but Barabbas,* John 18.40. And finally all this ſcene of indignities incloſ'd with the ſpightful pageantry of *mockery* acted by the ſouldiers, *Matt.* 27.28. and the yet more barbarous inſultings of Prieſts and Scribes, *verſe* 41. Is any man deſpiſed or deſerted by his friends? he was contemned by his country-men, thought frantic by his friends, betray'd by one of his diſciples, abandon'd by all, unleſs that one who follow'd him longeſt, to renounce him the moſt ſhamefully by a three-fold abjuration. Nay what is infinitly more than this, he ſeem'd deſerted by God alſo, as is witneſſed by that doleful exclamation, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Mark 15. 34. Is any diſſatisfied with the hardſhips or laboriousneſs of his life? let him remember his Savior's was not a life of delicacy or eaſe: he was never enter'd in thoſe Academies of luxury, where men are *gorgeouſly apparell'd and live delicately,* Luke 7. 25. but he was brought up under the mean roof of a Carpenter, and conſequently ſubjected to all the lowneſs of ſuch an education. His initiation to his Prophetic office was with the miraculous ſeverity of a fourty days faſt, and in his diſcharge of it, we find him in perpetual labors, *going about doing good,* Acts 10. 38. and that not in triumph, like a Prince beſtowing his largeſſes, but in weary peregrinations, never riding but once, and that only upon a borrow'd beaſt, *and to fulfil a prophecy,* Matt. 21.4. Do's any man groan under ſharp and acute pains? let him conſider what his Redeemer endur'd, how in his infancy at his Circumciſion he offer'd the firſt fruits, as an earneſt of that bloody vintage when *he trod the wine-preſs alone,* Iſaiah 63. 3. Let him attend him thro' all the ſtages of his direful Paſſion, and behold his arms pinion'd with rough cords, his head ſmote with a reed, and torn with his crown of thorns, his back ploughed with thoſe *long furrows* (Pſalm 120. 3.) the ſcourges had made; his macerated feeble body oppreſt with the weight of his croſs, and at laſt rackt and extended on it;

his hands and feet, thoſe nervous and conſequently moſt ſenſible parts tranſfixt with nails, his whole body faſtned to that accurſed tree, and expoſed naked to the air in a cold ſeaſon; his throat parched with thirſt, and yet more afflicted with that vinegar and gall wherewith they pretended to relieve him; and finally his life expiring amidſt the full ſenſe of theſe accurate torments. Laſtly do's any man labor under the bittereſt of all ſorrows, importunate temtations to, or a wounded ſpirit for ſin? even here alſo he may find that he has an *high Prieſt who hath bin touched with the ſenſe of his infirmities*, Heb.4.15. He was violently aſſaulted with a ſucceſſion of temtations, *Matt*.4. and we cannot doubt but Satan would on him employ the utmoſt of his skill. Nor was he leſs oppreſt with the burden of ſin, (ours I mean, tho' not his own.) What may we think were his apprehenſions in the Garden, when he ſo earneſtly deprecated that which was his whole errand into the world? What a dreadful preſſure was that which wrung from him that bloody ſweat, and caſt him into that inexplicable agony, the horror whereof was beyond the comprehenſions of any but his who felt it? And finally how amazing was the ſenſe of Divine wrath, which extorted that ſtupendous complaint, that *ſtrong cry* on the Croſs, *Heb*.5.7. the ſharp accent whereof, if it do aright ſound in our hearts, muſt certainly quite overwhelm our loudeſt groans? And now certainly I may ſay with *Pilate*, *Ecce homo*, behold the man; or rather with a more Divine Author, Behold *if ever there were ſorrows like unto his ſorrows*, Lam.1.12.

'Tis moſt reaſonable to expect, that what was done in the green tree, ſhould be done in the dry.

12. And ſure it were but a reaſonable inference, that which we find made by Chriſt himſelf, *if theſe things be done in a green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry*? Luke 23.31. If an imputative guilt could nouriſh ſo ſcorching a flame, pull down ſo ſevere a wrath; what can we expect, who are merely made up of combuſtible matter, whoſe proper perſonal ſins cry for vengeance? Sure were we to judge by human meaſures, we ſhould reckon to have more than a double portion of our Savior's Sufferings entail'd upon us: yet ſuch is the efficacy of his, that they have commuted for ours, and have left us only ſuch a ſhare, as may evidence our relation to our crucified Lord: ſuch as may ſerve only for badges and cognizances to whom we retain. For alas, let the moſt afflicted of us weigh our ſorrows with his, how abſurdly unequal will the compariſon appear? And therefore as the beſt expedient to baffle our mutinies, to ſhame us out of our repinings, let us often draw this uneven parallel, confront our petty uneaſineſſes with his unſpeakable torments; and ſure 'tis impoſſible but our admiration and gratitude muſt ſupplant our impatiences.

'Tis a criminal niceneſs not to be willing to follow the Captain of our Salvation.

13. This is indeed the method to which the Apoſtle directs us, *Conſider him that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leaſt ye be weary and faint in your minds*: *ye have not yet reſiſted unto blood*, Heb.12.3,4. Was he contradicted, and ſhall we expect to be humor'd and comply'd with? Did he reſiſt to blood, and ſhall we think thoſe preſſures intolerable, which force only a few tears from us? This is ſuch an unmanly niceneſs, as utterly makes us unfit to follow the Captain of our Salvation. What a ſoldier is he like to make, that will take no ſhare of the hazards and hardſhips of his General? Honeſt *Uriah* would not take the lawful ſolaces of his own houſe, upon the conſideration that his *Lord Joab* (tho' but his fellow ſubject) *lay encamped in the open fields*, 2 Sam.11.11. yea tho' he was ſent by him from the Camp. And ſhall we baſely forſake ours in purſuit of our eaſe? He is of a degenerous ſpirit, whom the example of his Superior will not animate. *Plutarch* tells us, that *Cato* marching thro' the deſerts, was ſo diſtreſt for water, that a ſmall quantity was brought to him in a helmet

as a great prize, which he refuſing becauſe he could not help his ſoldiers to the like, they were ſo tranſported with that generoſity, that it extinguiſht the ſenſe of their thirſt, and they were aſhamed to complain of what their Leader voluntarily endur'd for their ſakes. And ſurely we extremely diſcredit our inſtitution, if we cannot equal their ingenuity, and follow ours with as great alacrity thro' all the difficulties he has trac'd before us, and for us.

14. Nor let us think to excuſe our ſelves upon the impotency of our fleſh, which wants the aſſiſtance which his Divinity gave him: for that plea is ſuperſeded by the fore-mention'd examples of the Saints, men of like paſſions with us, who not only patiently, but joyfully endur'd all tribulations; by which it appears it is not impoſſible to our nature, with thoſe aids of Grace which are common to us with them: for certainly the difference between them and us is not ſo much in the degrees of the aids, as in the diligence of employing them. Let us therefore, as the Apoſtle adviſes, *lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees*, Heb. 12. 12. and with a noble emulation follow thoſe heroic patterns they have ſet us. And ſince we ſee that even thoſe Favorites of heaven, have ſmarted ſo ſeverely, let us never dream of an immunity; but when ever we find our ſelves inclining to any ſuch flattering hope, let every one of us upbraid our ſelves in thoſe terms the *Jews* did our Savior, *Art thou greater than Abraham, and the Prophets, who makeſt thou thy ſelf*? Joh. 8. 53. Nay we may deſcend lower and take in not only all the inferior Saints of former times, but all thoſe our contemporaries in ſufferings, which are moſt within our view, and may ask the Apoſtle's queſtion, *what then? are we better than they*? Rom. 3. 9. If we think we are, 'tis certain we are ſo much worſe by that inſolence; and if we confeſs we are not, upon what ſcore can we pretend to be better treated? To conclude, let us not pore only upon our peculiar evils, but attentively look about us, and conſider what others endure: and ſince in frolicks we can ſport our ſelves with many uneaſineſſes for company ſake, let us not be more puſillanimous in our ſober moods, but every man chearfully take his turn in bearing the common burden of mortality, till we put off both it and its appendages together, *when this mortal ſhall put on immortality*, 1 Cor. 15. 54.

The exemplary practice of holy men takes away the excuſe of human frailty.

SECT. X.

Of particular Aids for the gaining of Contentment.

1. WE have now paſt thro' all thoſe conſiderations we at firſt propos'd, and may truſt the conſidering Reader to make his own collections: yet becauſe impatience is the vice that has bin all this while arraign'd, I am to fore-ſee it poſſible, that thoſe who have the greateſt degree of that, may be the leaſt willing to attend the whole proceſs, and therefore I think it may not be amiſs, for their eaſe to ſuit and reduce all into ſome ſhort directions and rules for the acquiring Contentment.

To general conſideration, particular will uſefully ſucceed.

2. The firſt and moſt fundamental is, the mortifying our Pride, which as it is the ſeminary of moſt ſins, ſo eſpecially this of repining. Men that are highly opinion'd of themſelves, are commonly unſatisfiable: for how well ſoever they are treated, they ſtill think it ſhort of their merits. Princes have often experimented this in thoſe who have done them ſignal ſervices; but God finds it in thoſe who have done him none, and we expect he

The firſt direction is to have a low opinion of ones ſelf.

he ſhall diſpenſe to us according to thoſe falſe eſtimates we put upon our ſelves. Therefore he that aſpires to Content, muſt firſt take truer meſures of himſelf, and conſider that as he was nothing till God gave him a being, ſo all that he can produce from that being, is God's by original right, and therefore can pretend to nothing of reward; ſo that whatever he receives, is ſtill upon the account of new bounty; and to complain that he has no more, is like the murmurs of an unthankful debtor, who would ſtill encreaſe thoſe ſcores which he knows he can never pay.

A ſecond, to reflect on the goods that are enjoyed.

3. In the ſecond place, let every man conſider how many bleſſings (notwithſtanding his no clame to any) he daily enjoys: and whether thoſe he ſo impatiently raves after be not much inferior to them. Nay let him ask his own heart, whether he would quit all thoſe he has, for them he wants, and if he would not, (as I ſuppoſe no man in his wits would, thoſe wits being part of the barter) let him then judge how unreaſonable his repinings are, when himſelf confeſſes he has the better part of worldly happineſs, and never any man living had all.

A third, to be thankful for them.

4. In the third place therefore let him ſecure his duty of thankfulneſs for thoſe good things he hath, and that will inſenſibly undermine his impatiences for the reſt, it being impoſſible to be at once thankful and murmuring. To this purpoſe it were very well, if he would keep a ſolemn catalogue of all the bounties, protections, and deliverances he has receiv'd from God's hand, and every night examin what acceſſions that day has brought to the ſum: and he that did this, would undoubtedly find ſo many incitations to gratitude, that all thoſe to diſcontent would be ſtifled in the crowd. And ſince acknowledgment of God's mercies is all the tribute he exacts for them, we muſt certainly look on that as an indiſpenſable duty: and therefore he that finds that God ſhortens his hand, ſtops the efflux of his bounty towards him, ſhould reflect on himſelf, whether he be not behind in that homage by which he holds, and have not by his unthankfulneſs *turn'd away good things from him*, Jer. 5. 25. And if he find it ſo (as who alas is there that may not?) he cannot ſure for ſhame complain, but muſt in prudence reinforce his gratitude for what is left, as the beſt means to recover what he has loſt.

A fourth, to reflect that good things are enjoyed, when the contrary are deſerv'd.

5. But his murmurs will yet be more amazingly ſilenc'd, if in the fourth place he compares the good things he enjoys with the ill he has done. Certainly this is a moſt infallible cure for our impatiences, the holieſt man living being able to accuſe himſelf of ſuch ſins, as would according to all human meaſures of equity forfeit all bleſſings, and pull down a greater weight of judgment than the moſt miſerable groan under. Therefore as before I adviſed to keep a catalogue of benefits receiv'd, ſo here it would be of uſe to draw up one of ſins committed. And doubtleſs he that confronts the one with the other, cannot but be aſtoniſhed to find them both ſo numerous, equally wondring at God's mercy in continuing his bleſſings, in deſpight of all his provocations, and at his own baſeneſs in continuing his provocations, in deſpight of all thoſe bleſſings. Indeed 'tis nothing but our affected ignorance of our own demerits, that makes it poſſible for us to repine under the ſevereſt of God's diſpenſations. Would we but ranſack our hearts, and ſee all the abominations that lie there, nay would the moſt of us but recolleſt thoſe barefac'd crimes which even the world can witneſs againſt us, we ſhould find more than enough to balance the heavieſt of our preſſures. When therefore by our impatient ſtruglings we fret and gall our ſelves under our burdens, let us interrogate our ſouls in the words of the Prophet, *Why doth a living man complain, a man for the puniſhment*

niſhment of his ſin? Let us not ſpend our breath in murmurs and out-cries, which will only ſerve to provoke more ſtripes: but *let us ſearch and try our waies, and turn again to the Lord,* Lam. 3. 39,40. diligently ſeek out *that accurſed thing,* which has cauſed our diſcomfeiture, Joſ. 6. 18. and by the removal of that, prepare the way for the acceſs of mercy. But alas how prepoſterous a method do we take in our afflictions? We accuſe every thing but what we ought, furiouſly fly at all the ſecond cauſes of our calamity, nay too often at the firſt by impious diſputes of providence, and in the mean time, as *Job* ſpeaks, *the root of the matter is found in us,* Job 19. 28. We ſhelter and protect in our boſom the real Author of our miſeries. The true way then to allay the ſenſe of our ſufferings, is to ſharpen that of our ſins. The prodigal thought the meaneſt condition in his fathers family a preferment, *Make me one of thy hired ſervants,* Luke 15.19. And if we have his penitence, we ſhall have his ſubmiſſion alſo, and calmly attend Gods diſpoſals of us.

A fifth, to reflect that what befalls us, is from the hand of God; and a ſixth, that 'tis an advantage to have here our evil things.

6. As every man in his affliction is to look inward on his own heart, ſo alſo upward, and conſider by whoſe providence all events are order'd. *Is there any evil* (*i. e.* of puniſhment) *in the city, and the Lord hath not done it*? Am. 3. 6. and what are we worms that we ſhould diſpute with him? Shall a man contend with his Maker? Let the *potſherd ſtrive with the potſherds of the earth,* Iſa.45.9. And as his power is not to be control'd, ſo neither is his juſtice to be impeach'd. *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right*? Gen. 18. 25. And where we can neither reſiſt nor appeal, what have we to do but humbly to ſubmit? Nor are we only compell'd to it by neceſſity, but induced and invited by intereſt, ſince his diſpenſations are directed not barely to aſſert his dominion, but to evidence his paternal care over us. He diſcerns our needs, and accordingly applies to us. The benignity of his nature permits him not to take delight in our diſtreſſes, *he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men,* Lam. 3.33. and therefore when ever he adminiſters unto us a bitter cup, we may be ſure the ingredients are medicinal, and ſuch as our infirmities require. He dares not truſt our intemperate appetites with unmixt proſperities, the luſhiouſneſs whereof tho' it may pleaſe our palats, yet like St. *John*'s book, Rev. 10. 9. that *hony in the mouth may prove gall in the bowels,* ingender the moſt fatal diſeaſes. Let us therefore in our calamities *not conſult with fleſh and blood,* Gal. 1.16. (which the more it is bemoan'd, the more it complains) but look to the hand that ſtrikes; and aſſure our ſelves, that the ſtripes are not more ſevere, than he ſees neceſſary in order to our good: and ſince they are ſo, they ought in reaſon to be our choices as well as his; and not only Religion, but ſelf-love will promt us to ſay, with old *Ely, It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good,* 1 Sam. 3.11. But alas we do not underſtand what is our intereſt; becauſe we do not rightly underſtand what we are our ſelves. We conſider our ſelves merely in our animal being, our bodies and thoſe ſenſitive faculties veſted in them, and when we are invaded there, we think we are undone, tho' that breach be made only, to relieve that diviner part within us, beſieg'd and oppreſt with the fleſh about it (for ſo God knows it too often is;) or if we do not conſider it in that notion of an enemy, yet at the utmoſt eſtimate, the body is to the ſoul but as the garment to the body, a decent caſe or cover: now what man (not ſtark frantic) would not rather have his clothes cut than his fleſh? and then by the rate of proportion, we may well queſtion our own ſobriety, when we repine that our ſouls are ſecur'd at the coſt of our bodies, and that is certainly the worſt, the unkindeſt deſign that God has upon us; and our impatient

reſiſtances ſerve only to fruſtrate the kind, the medicinal part of afflictions, but will not at all reſcue us from the ſevere. Our murmurings may ruine our ſouls, but will never avert any of our outward calamities.

A ſeventh, to have a right eſtimate of the world, and the ſtate of humanity.

7. A ſeventh help to Contentment is to have a right eſtimate of the world, and the common ſtate of humanity: to conſider the world but as a ſtage, and our ſelves but as actors, and to reſolve that it is very little material what part we play ſo we do it well. A Comedian may get as much applauſe by acting the ſlave as the conqueror, and he that acts the one to day, may to morrow reverſe the part, and perſonate the other. So great are the viciſſitudes of the world, that there is no building any firm hopes upon it. All the certainty we have of it, is, that in every condition it has its uneaſineſſes: ſo that when we court a chance, we rather ſeek to vary than end our miſeries. And certainly he that has well impreſt upon his mind the vanity and vexation of the world, cannot be much ſurpriſed at any thing that befalls him in it. We expect no more of any thing but to do its kind, and we may as well be angry that we cannot bring the lions to our cribs, or fix the wind to a certain point, as that we cannot ſecure our ſelves from dangers and diſappointments in this rough and mutable world. We are therefore to lay it as an infallible maxim, that in this vale of tears every man muſt meet with ſorrows and diſaſters: and then ſure we may take our peculiar with evenneſs of temper, as being but the natural conſequent of our being men. And tho' poſſibly we may every one think himſelf to have a double portion, yet that is uſually from the deceitful compariſons we make of our ſelves with others. We take the magnifying glaſſes of diſcontent and envy when we view our own miſeries and others felicities, but look on our enjoyments and their ſufferings thro' the contracting optics of ingratitude and incompaſſion: and whilſt we do thus, 'tis impoſſible but we muſt foment our own diſſatisfactions. He that will compare to good purpoſe muſt do it honeſtly and ſincerely, and view his neighbors calamities with the ſame attention he do's his own, and his own comforts with the ſame he do's his neighbors: and then many of the great ſeeming inequalities would come pretty neer a level.

An eighth, to conſider how ill natur'd a thing envy and diſcontent is.

8. But even where they do not, it, in the eighth place deſerves however to be conſider'd how ill natur'd a thing it is, for any man to think himſelf more miſerable becauſe another is happy: and yet this is the very thing, by which alone many men have made themſelves wretched: for many have created wants, meerly from the envious contemplation of other mens abundance. And indeed there is nothing more diſingenuous, (or to go higher) more Diabolical. *Lucifer* was happy enough in his original ſtate, yet could not think himſelf ſo becauſe he was *not like the moſt high*, Iſa. 14. 14. And when by that inſolent ambition he had forfeited bliſs, it has ever ſince bin an aggravation of his torment, that mankind is aſſumed to a capacity of it; and accordingly he makes it the deſign of his envious induſtry to defeat him. Now how perfectly are the two firſt parts of this copy tranſcrib'd, by thoſe who firſt cannot be ſatisfied with any inferior degree of proſperity, and then whet their impatiences with other mens enjoyments of what they cannot attain? And 'tis much to be doubted that they who go thus far may compleat the parallel, and endeavor when they have opportunity to undermine that happineſs they envy. Therefore ſince Satan is ſo apt to impreſs his whole image, where he has drawn any of his lineaments, it concerns us warily to guard our ſelves, and by a Chriſtian ſympathy with our brethren, *rejoyce with them that rejoyce*, Rom. 12. 15. make the comfort of others, an allay, not an improvement of our own miſeries. Charity

has a ſtrange magnetic power, and attracts the concerns of our brethren to us, and he that has that in his breaſt can never want refreſhment, whilſt any about him are happy; for by adopting their intereſt, he ſhares in their joys. *Jethro* tho' an alien *rejoyced for all the good God had done to Iſrael*, Exod. 18.9. and why ſhould not we have as ſenſible a concurrence with our fellow Chriſtians? And he that has ſo, will ſtill find ſomthing to balance his own ſufferings.

A ninth, to deſire few things.

9. Let him that aſpires to contentment ſet bounds to his deſire. 'Tis our common fault in this affair, we uſually begin at the wrong end, we *enlarge our deſires as hell, and cannot be ſatisfied*, Hab. 2.5. and then think God uſes us ill, if he do not fill our inſatiable appetites: whereas if we would confine our expectations to thoſe things which we need, or he has promis'd, there are few of us who would not find them abundantly anſwer'd. Alas how few things are there which our nature (if not ſtimulated by fancy and luxury) requires? And how rare is it to find them who want thoſe? Nay who have not many additionals for delight and pleaſure? And yet God's promiſe under the Goſpel extends only to thoſe neceſſaries; for where *Chriſt* aſſures his diſciples that *theſe things ſhall be added unto them*, Matt.6.33. the context apparently reſtrains *theſe things* to meat and drink and clothing. Therefore take *no thought for the life what you ſhall eat, or what you ſhall drink, nor yet for the body what you ſhall put on*, verſe 25. Now what pretence have we to clame more than our Charter gives us? God never articled with the ambitious to give him honors, with the covetous to fill his bags, or with the voluptuous to feed his luxuries. Let us therefore, if we expect to be ſatisfied, modeſtly confine our deſires within the limits he has ſet us: and then every acceſſion which he ſuperadds will appear (what it is) a largeſs and bounty. But whilſt our appetites are boundleſs, and rather ſtretch'd than filled with our acqueſts; what poſſibility is there of their ſatisfaction? And when we importune God for it, we do but aſſign him ſuch a task the Poets made a repreſentation of their Hell, the filling a ſieve with water, or the rolling a ſtone up a precipice.

A tenth, to confine our thoughts to the preſent time.

10. A great expedient for Contentment, is to confine our thoughts to the preſent, and not to let them looſe to future events. Would we but do this, we might ſhake off a great part of our burden: for we often heap fantaſtic loads upon our ſelves by anxious preſages of things which perhaps will never happen, and yet ſink more under them, than under the real weight that is actually upon us. And this is certainly one of the greateſt follies imaginable: for either the evil will come or it will not, if it will 'tis ſure no ſuch deſirable gueſt that we ſhould go out to meet it, we ſhall feel it time enough when it falls on us, we need not project to anticipate our ſenſe of it: but if it will not, what extreme madneſs is it for a man to torment himſelf with that which will never be, to create engines of tortures, and by ſuch aerial afflictions, make himſelf as miſerable as the moſt real ones could do? And truly this is all that we uſually get by our fore-ſights. Previſion is one of God's attributes, and he mocks at all our pretences to it, by a frequent defeating of all our fore-caſts. He do's it often in our hopes: ſome little croſs circumſtance many times demoliſhes thoſe goodly machins we raiſe to our ſelves: and he do's it no leſs in our fears, thoſe ills we ſolemnly expected often baulk us, and others from an unexpected coaſt ſuddenly invade us. And ſince we are ſo blind, ſo ſhort-ſighted, let us never take upon us to be ſcouts, to diſcover danger at a diſtance (for 'tis manifold odds we ſhall only bring home falſe alarms) but let us reſt our ſelves upon that moſt admirable Aphoriſm of our bleſſed

Lord, *Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof*, Matt. 6. 34. apply our ſelves with Chriſtian courage to bear the preſent, and leave God either to augment or diminiſh, as he ſees fit for the future. Or if we will needs be looking forward, let it be in obedience not contradiction to our duty: let us entertain our ſelves with thoſe futurities which we are ſure are not Chimera's, death and judgment, heaven and hell. The nearer we draw theſe things to our view, the more inſenſible will all intermedial objects be; they will deceive our ſenſe of preſent, and much more foreſtal the apprehenſion of future evils: for 'tis our neglect of things eternal, that leaves us thus at leiſure for the tranſitory.

An eleventh, to have recourſe to God by prayer.

11. In the laſt place let us in all our diſtreſſes ſuperſede our anxieties and ſollicitudes by that moſt effectual remedy the Apoſtle preſcribes, *Is any man afflicted, let him pray*, Jam. 5. 14. And this ſure is a moſt rational preſcription: for alas what elſe can we do towards the redreſs of our griefs? We who are ſo impotent, that we have not power over the moſt deſpicable excreſcence of our own body, cannot make *one hair white or black*, Matt. 5. 36. what can we do towards the new moulding our condition, or modelling things without us? Our ſollicitudes ſerve only to bind our burdens faſter upon us, but this expedient of Prayer will certainly relieve us. *Call upon me*, ſaies God, *in the time of trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou ſhalt praiſe me*, Pſal. 50. 15. When ever therefore we are ſinking in the floods of affliction, let us thus ſupport our ſelves by repreſenting our wants unto our gracious Lord, cry unto him as St. *Peter* did, Matt. 14. 30. and he will *take us by the hand, and be the winds* never ſo *boiſterous or contrary*, preſerve us from ſinking: the waves or billows of this troubleſom world, will ſerve but to toſs us cloſer into his arms, who can with a word appeaſe the rougheſt tempeſt, or reſcue from it. O let us not then be ſo unkind to our ſelves, as to neglect this infallible means of our deliverance! but with the Pſalmiſt take our refuge under the *ſhadow of Divine wings till the calamity be over-paſt*, Pſal. 57. 1. And as this is a ſure expedient in all our real important afflictions, ſo it is a good teſt by which to try what are ſo. We are often peeviſh and diſquieted at trifles, nay we take up the quarrels of our luſts and vices, and are diſcontented when they want their wiſht ſupplies. Now in either of theſe caſes, no man that at all conſiders who he praies to, will dare to inſert theſe in his prayers, it being a contemt of God to invoke him in things ſo ſlight as the one or impious as the other. It will therefore be good for every man when he goes to addreſs for relief, to conſider which of his preſſures they are, that are worthy of that ſolemn deprecation: and when he has ſingled thoſe out, let him reflect, and he will find he has in that prejudg'd all his other diſcontents as frivolous or wicked. And then ſure he cannot think fit to harbour them, but muſt for ſhame diſmiſs them, ſince they are ſuch, as he dares not avow to him, from whom alone he can expect relief. God alwaies pities our real miſeries, but our imaginary ones dare not demand it. Let us not then create ſuch diſeaſes to our ſelves, as we cannot declare to our Phyſician: and when thoſe are precluded, for all the reſt St. *Paul*'s recipe is a Catholicon, *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayers and ſupplications, with thankſgiving, let your requeſts be made known to God.* Phil. 4. 6.

Sect. XI.

Of Reſignation.

1. AND now amidſt ſuch variety of Receits, 'twill be hard to inſtance any one ſort of calamity which can eſcape their efficacy, if they be but duly apply'd. But indeed we have generally a compendious way of fruſtrating all remedies by never making uſe of them: like fantaſtic patients we are well enough content to have our diſeaſe diſcourſt, and medicines preſcrib'd, but when the Phyſic comes, have ſtill ſome pretence or other to protract the taking it. But I ſhall beſeech the Reader to conſider, that counſels are no charms, to work without any cooperation of the concern'd perſon: they muſt be adverted to, they muſt be ponder'd and conſider'd, and finally they muſt be practic'd, or elſe the utmoſt good they can do us, is to give us a few hours divertiſement in the reading: but they do us a miſchief that infinitly out-weighs it, for they improve our guilts by the ineffective tender they make of reſcuing us from them, and leave us accountable not only for the original crimes, but our obſtinate adheſion to them in ſpight of admonition.

Counſels are not charms, to operate by being repeated;

2. I ſay this becauſe it is a little too notorious, that many take up books only as they do cards or dice, as an inſtrument of diverſion. 'Tis a good entertainment for their curioſity to ſee what can be ſaid upon any ſubject, and be it well or ill handled, they can pleaſe themſelves equally with the ingenuity or ridiculouſneſs of the compoſure, and when they have done this, they have done all they deſign'd. This indeed may be tolerable in Romances and Play-books, but ſure it ill befits Divinity. And yet I fear it ofteneſt happens there: for in the former ſome do project for ſome trivial improvements, as the imbelliſhing of their ſtile, the inſpiriting of their fancies; and ſome men would ſcarce be able to drive their pedling trade of wit, did they not thus ſweep the ſtage: but alas how many books of piety are read, of which one cannot diſcern the leaſt tincture in mens converſations, which ſure do's in a great meaſure proceed from the want of a determinate deſign in their reading, mens practice being not apt to be leſs rovers than their ſpeculation. He that takes a practical ſubject in hand, muſt do it with a deſign to conform his practice to what he ſhall there be convinc'd to be his duty, and he that comes not with this probity of mind, is not like to be much benefited by his reading.

Nor are books to be taken up as cards and dice for diverſion;

3. But one would think this ſhould be an unneceſſary caution at this time, for ſince the intent of this Tract is only to ſhew men the way to Contentment, 'tis to be ſuppos'd the Readers will be as much in earneſt as the Writer can be, it being every man's proper and moſt important intereſt, the inſtating him in the higheſt and moſt ſupreme felicity that this world can admit: yet for all this fair probability, I doubt many will in this inſtance have the ſame indifference they have in their other ſpiritual concerns.

Eſpecially in ſo important a concern, as the being contented.

4. 'Tis true indeed that a querulous repining humor is one of the moſt pernicious, the moſt ugly habits incident to mankind, but yet as deformed people are oft the moſt in love with themſelves, ſo this crooked piece of our temper is of all others the moſt indulgent to it ſelf. Melancholy is the moſt ſtubborn and untractable of all humors: and diſcontent being the off ſpring of that, partakes of that inflexibility: and accordingly we

Diſcontent is a humor which is moſt indulgent to it ſelf, and 'tis hard to bring men to a real willingneſs to be cur'd.

ſee how impregnable it often is againſt all aſſaults of reaſon and Religion too. *Jonah* in a ſullen mood would juſtify his diſcontent even to God himſelf, and in ſpight of that calm reproof, *doſt thou well to be angry*? Jon. 4.9. aver *he did well to be angry even to death*. And do we not frequently ſee men upon an impatience of ſome diſappointment, grow angry even at their comforts? Their friends, their children, their meat, their drink, every thing grows nauſeous to them, and in a frantic diſcontent, they often fling away thoſe things which they moſt value. Beſides this peeviſh impatience is of ſo aerial a diet, that 'tis ſcarce poſſible to ſtarve it. 'Twill nouriſh it ſelf with Phantaſms and Chimera's, ſuborn a thouſand ſurmiſes and imaginary diſtreſſes to abet its pretences: and tho' every one of us can remonſtrate to one another, the unreaſonableneſs of this diſcontent; yet ſcarce any of us will draw the argument home, or ſuffer our ſelves to be convinc'd by what we urge as irrefragable to others. Nay farther this humor is impatient of any diverſion, loves to converſe only with it ſelf. In bodily pains, men that deſpair of cure are yet glad of allaies and mitigations, and ſtrive by all arts to divert and deceive the ſenſe of their anguiſh; but in this diſeaſe of the mind, men cheriſh and improve their torment, roll and chew the bitter pill in their mouths, that they may be ſure to have its utmoſt flavor; and by devoting all their thoughts to the ſubject of their grief, keep up an uninterrupted ſenſe of it: as if they had the ſame Tyranny for themſelves which *Caligula* had for others, and loved to feel themſelves die. Indeed there is not a more abſurd contradiction in the world, than to hear men cry out of the weight, the intolerableneſs of their burden, and yet graſp it as faſt as if their life were bound up in it; will not depoſite it, no not for the ſmalleſt breathing time. A ſtrange faſcination ſure, and yet ſo frequent that it ought to be the fundamental care of him that would cure men of their diſcontents, to bring them to a hearty willingneſs of being cured.

Diſcontent is a dropſy of the mind, is not to be cur'd by having it's thirſts ſatisfied, but by altering the conſtitution.

5. It may be this will look like paradox, and every man will be apt to ſay he wiſhes nothing more in earneſt, than to be cured of his preſent diſcontent. He that is poor would be cured by wealth, he that is low and obſcure by honor and greatneſs: but ſo an Hydropic perſon may ſay he deſires to have his thirſt cur'd by a perpetual ſupply of drink: yet all ſober people know, that that is the way only to increaſe it: but let the whole habit of the body be rectified, and then the thirſt will ceaſe of it ſelf. And certainly 'tis the very ſame in the preſent caſe, no outward acceſſions will ever ſatisfy our cravings, our appetites muſt be tam'd and reduc'd, and then they will never be able to raiſe tumults, or put us into mutiny and diſcontent: and he (and none but he) that ſubmits to this method, can truly be ſaid to deſire a cure.

The cure is certainly poſſible:

6. But he that thus atteſts the reality of his deſires, and ſeeks Contentment in its proper ſphere, may ſurely arrive at ſome conſiderable degrees of it. We find in all ages men that only by the direction of natural light have calmed their diſquiets, and reaſon'd themſelves into Contentment, even under great and ſenſible preſſures; men who amidſt the acuteſt torments have preſerv'd a ſerenity of mind, and have fruſtrated contemts and reproches by diſregarding them: and ſure we give a very ill account of our Chriſtianity, if we cannot do as much with it as they did without it.

And if we do our part, will be aſſiſted by God's goodneſs.

7. I do not here propoſe ſuch a Stoical inſenſibility as makes no diſtinction of events, which, tho' it has bin vainly pretended to by many, yet ſure was never attain'd by any upon the ſtrength of diſcourſe. Some natural dulneſs or caſual ſtupefaction muſt concur to that, and perhaps by

doing ſo, has had the luck to be canoniz'd for vertue. I mean only ſuch a ſuperiority of mind as raiſes us above our ſufferings, tho' it exempt us not from the ſenſe of them. We cannot propoſe to our ſelves a higher pattern in any vertue than our bleſſed Lord: yet we ſee he not only felt that load under which he lay, but had the moſt pungent and quick ſenſe of it, ſuch as promted thoſe earneſt deprecations, *Father, if it be poſſible let this cup paſs*: yet all thoſe diſplacencies of his fleſh were ſurmounted by the reſignation of his ſpirit, *nevertheleſs not what I will, but what thou wilt*, Matt. 26. 39. And certainly he that in imitation of this pattern, do's in ſpight of all the reluctancies of his ſenſe, thus entirely ſubmit his will, however he may be ſad, yet he is not impatient; nor is he like to be ſad long; for to him that is thus reſign'd, *light will ſpring up*, Pſalm. 97. 11. ſome good Angel will be ſent like that to our Savior to relieve his diſconſolation. God will ſend either ſome outward allaies, or give ſuch interior comforts and ſupports, as ſhall counterpoiſe thoſe afflictions he takes not off.

God's deſign in correcting us is that of a Parent to break our wills.

8. Indeed the grand deſign of God in correcting us is (the ſame with that of a prudent parent towards his child) to break our wills. That ſtubborn faculty will ſcarce bend with eaſy touches, and therefore do's require ſome force: and when by that rougher handling, he has brought it to a pliantneſs, the work is done. 'Tis therefore our intereſt to cooperate with this deſign, to aſſiſt as much as we are able towards the ſubjugating this unruly part of our ſelves. This is that *Sheba* 2 Sam. 20. the ſurrendring of whom is God's expectation in all the cloſe ſieges he laies to us. Let us then be ſo wiſe, as by an early reſigning it to divert his farther hoſtilities, and buy our peace with him.

Reſignation is the ſhort way to ſerenity of mind.

9. And truly this is the way not only to gain peace with him, but our ſelves too: 'tis the uſurpation of our will over our reaſon which breeds all the confuſion and tumults within our own breaſts, and there is no poſſibility of curbing its inſolence, but by putting it into ſafe cuſtody, committing it to him who (as our Church teaches us) alone can order the unruly wills of ſinful men. Indeed nothing but experience can fully inform us of the ſerenity and calm of that ſoul, who has reſign'd his will to God. All care of chooſing for himſelf is happily ſuperſeded, he is temted to no anxious forecaſts for future events, for he knows nothing can happen in contradiction of that ſupreme will, in which he has ſanctuary: which will certainly chooſe for him with that tenderneſs and regard, that a faithful Guardian would for his Pupil, an indulgent Father for his Child that caſts it ſelf into his arms. Certainly there is not in the world ſuch a holy ſort of artifice, ſo Divine a charm to tie our God to us, as this of reſigning our ſelves to him. We find the *Gibeonites* by yielding themſelves vaſſals to the *Iſraelites*, had their whole army at their beck to reſcue them in their danger, *Joſ.* 10. 6. and can we think God is leſs conſiderate of his homagers and dependents? No certainly, his honor as well as his compaſſion is concern'd in the relief of thoſe who have ſurrendred themſelves to him.

A method by which our wills can never be croſt.

10. Farther yet, when by reſignation we have united our wills to God, we have quite changed the ſcene, and we who when our wills ſtood ſingle were liable to perpetual defeats, in this bleſſed combination can never be croſt. When our will is twiſted and involved with God's, the ſame Omnipotence which backs his will, do's alſo attend ours. God's will, we are ſure, admits of no controle, can never be reſiſted, and we have the ſame ſecurity for ours, ſo long as it concurs with it. By this means

all calamities are unſting'd, and even thoſe things which are moſt repugnant to our ſenſitive natures, are yet very agreeable to our ſpirits, when we conſider they are implicitly our own choice, ſince they are certainly his, whom we have deputed to elect for us. Indeed there can be no face of adverſity ſo averting and formidable, which ſet in this light will not look amiable. We ſee daily how many uneaſineſſes and prejudices men will contentedly ſuffer in purſuit of their wills: and if we have really eſpouſed God's, made his will ours, we ſhall with as great (nay far greater) alacrity embrace its diſtributions, how uneaſy ſoever to our ſenſe; our ſouls will more acquieſce in the accompliſhment of the Divine will, than onr fleſh can reluct to any ſevere effects of it.

Nothing can fall out unhappily.

11. Here then is that footing of firm ground, on which whoſoever can ſtand, may indeed do that which *Archimedes* boaſted, move the whole world. He may as to himſelf ſubvert the whole courſe of ſublunary things, unvenom all thoſe calamities which are to others the gall of Aſps; and in a farther ſenſe verify that Evangelical Prophecy, of *beating ſwords into plow-ſhares, ſpears into pruning hooks*, Iſa. 2. 4. the moſt hoſtile weapons, the moſt adverſe events ſhall be by him converted into inſtruments of fertility, ſhall only advance his ſpiritual growth.

The unreſign'd can get nothing by it, but the ſullen pleaſure of oppoſing God and tormenting themſelves.

12. And now who can chuſe but confeſs this a much more eligible ſtate, than to be alwaies harraſſed with ſolicitudes and cares, perpetually either fearing future defeats, or bewailing the paſt. And then what can we call it leſs than madneſs or enchantment, for men to act ſo contrary to their own dictates, yea to their very ſenſe and experience, to ſee and acknowledge the inexplicable felicity of a reſigned will, and yet perverſly to hold out theirs, tho' they can get nothing by it, but the ſullen pleaſure of oppoſing God, and tormenting themſelves? Let us therefore if not for our duty or eaſe, yet at leaſt for our reputation, the aſſerting our ſelves men of ſobriety and common ſenſe, do that which upon all theſe intereſts we are obliged; let us but give up our wills, and with them we ſhall certainly diveſt our ſelves of all our fruitleſs anxieties, and caſt our burdens upon him who invites us to do ſo. He who bears all our ſins, will bear all our ſorrows, our griefs too: if we will but be content to depoſite them, he will relieve us from all thoſe oppreſſing weights, which make *our ſouls cleave to the duſt*, Pſalm 119. 25. and will in exchange give us only his *light, his pleaſant burden*, Matt. 11. 30. In a word, there will be no care left for us, but that of keeping our ſelves in a capacity of his: let us but ſecure our love to him, and we are aſcertain'd that *all things ſhall work together for our good*, Rom. 8. 28.

Reſignation and Contentment differ only as the cauſe and the effect.

13. To conclude, Reſignation and Contentment are vertues not only of a near cognation and reſemblance, but they are linked as the Cauſe and the Effect. Let us but make ſure of Reſignation, and Content will flow into us without our farther induſtry: as on the contrary whilſt our wills are at defiance with God's, we ſhall alwaies find things at as great defiance with ours. All our ſubtleties or induſtries will never mould them to our ſatisfactions, till we have moulded our ſelves into that pliant temper that we can cordially ſay, *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good*, 1 Sam. 3. 18.

The

The Cloſe.

1. THis ſhort inſtitution of the *Art of Contentment*, cannot more naturally, or more deſirably draw to a concluſion, than in the reſort we have given it, in the boſome of divine *Providence*. The Roman conquerors as the laſt pitch of all their triumphs went to the Capitol, and laid their Garlands in the lap of *Jupiter*: but the Chriſtian has an eaſier way to triumph, to put his crown of thorns (for that is the trophy of his victories) within the arms of his gracious God; there lodg his fears, his wants, his ſorrows, and himſelf too, as in the beſt repoſitory.

The Chriſtian, like the Roman conquerors, as the laſt pitch of triumph, muſt lay their garland in the lap of their God.

2. The Goſpel command of *not caring for the morrow*, Matt.6.34. and being *careful for nothing*, Phil. 4. 6. nakedly propos'd, might ſeem the abandoning of us to all the calamities of life: but when we are directed to *caſt all our care* upon a gracious and all-powerful Parent, and are aſſur'd that *he cares for us*, 1 Pet. 5. 7. that *tho' a woman may forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion of the ſon of her womb, yet will he not forget* his children, Iſa. 49. 15. this will abundantly ſuperſede all cavil and objection. Whilſt wordly men truſt in an arm of fleſh, lay up *treſure on earth*, a prey for *ruſt and moth*, Matt. 6. 19. and *a torment* to themſelves, Jam. 5. 3. the Chriſtian has omnipotence for his ſupport, and a *treſure in heaven, where no thief approches, nor moth corrupts*, Matt. 6. 20. Whilſt bold inquirers call in queſtion Gods ſecret will, oblige him to their ſub or ſupralapſarian ſchemes, their abſolute or conditional decrees, their grace foreſeen or predetermin'd; the pious man with aweful acquieſcence ſubmits to that which is reveal'd: reſolves for ever to obey, but never to diſpute; as knowing that the belov'd Diſciple lean'd on his Maſters boſome; but 'tis the thiefs and traitors part to go about to rifle it.

'Tis the belov'd diſciples property, to lean on his Lords boſome.

3. 'Tis ſurely a modeſt demand in the behalf of God Almighty, that we ſhould allow him as much privilege in his world, as every Peſant clames in his Cottage; to be Maſter there, and diſpoſe of his houſe-hold as he thinks beſt: to *ſay to this man, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to his ſervant, do this, and he doth it*, Matt. 8. 9. And if we would afford him this liberty, there would be an immediate end put to all clamor and complaint.

God may demand as much privilege in his World as a Peſant clames in his Cottage.

4. We make it our daily prayer that the *will* of God *may be done in earth as it is in heaven*, with a ready, ſwift, and uninterrupted conſtancy. As 'tis Giantlike rebellion to ſet up our will againſt his, ſo it is mad perverſeneſs to ſet it up againſt our own; be diſpleaſed that our requeſts are granted, and repine that his, and therewith our will is done. It were indeed not only good manners, but good policy, to obſerve the direction of the Heathen, and *follow God*: nor prejudg his determinations by ours; but in a modeſt ſuſpenſion of our thoughts, *hearken what the Lord God will ſay concerning us, for he will ſpeak peace unto his people, and to his Saints that they turn not again*, Pſal. 85. 8.

We pray that Gods will may be done; and 'tis a ſtrange perverſeneſs to ſet up our will, at once againſt God's will and our own.

5. Or however upon ſurpriſe we may indulge to a paſſionate affection, and dote upon our illegitimate off-ſpring, our dearling guilts or follies, as *David* did upon that Child, who was the price of Murder and Adultery: yet when the brat is taken from us, when the *Child is dead*, it will become us to do as he did, riſe from our ſullen poſture on the earth, and *worſhip in the houſe of the Lord*, 2 Sam. 12. 20. It will behove us, as he ſaies in another place, to *lay our hand upon our mouth, becauſe it was his doing*, Pſal. 30. 10. and with holy *Job* Chap. 40. 4. when charg'd with his murmurings,

Eſpecially, to mourn when the dearling child is dead.

murings, *Behold I am vile, what ſhall I anſwer? Once have I ſpoken, but I will not anſwer: yea twice, but I will proceed no farther.*

Contentment is the riches of nature, as oppoſ'd to thoſe of fortune and opinion.

6. *Socrates* rightly ſaid of Contentment, oppoſing it to the riches of fortune and opinion, that 'tis the wealth of nature; for it gives every thing that we have learnt to want, and really need: but Reſignation is the riches of Grace, beſtowing all things that a Chriſtian not only needs, but can deſire, even Almighty God himſelf. He indeed, as the Scholemen teach, is the objective happineſs of the Creature; He who is the fountain of being, muſt be alſo of bleſſedneſs: and tho' this be only communicable to us, when we have put off that *fleſh which cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, and laid aſide that *corruption* which cannot *inherit incorruption*, 1 Cor. 15. yet even in this life, we may make approches to that bleſſed ſtate, by acts of Reſignation and denial of our ſelves. It was the generous ſaying of *Socrates* being about to die unto his friend; O *Crito*, ſince it is the will of God, ſo let it be: *Anytus* and *Melitus* may kill me, but cannot hurt me. But ſuch a reſignation, as 'tis infinitly a greater duty to a Chriſtian, ſo it is alſo a more firm ſecurity. In that caſe 'tis not the *Martyr*, but *Jeſus of Nazareth* who is thus perſecuted, and he who attaques him will find *it hard to kick againſt the pricks*, Act. 9. 5.

It was the utmoſt inſtance of profligate ſenſuality to murmur for want of leeks and onions.

7. There could not be a greater inſtance of the profligate ſenſuality of the *Iſraelites*, than that they murmured for want of *leeks and onions*, Num. 11. 5. when they eat Angels food, and had bread rain'd down from heaven. 'Tis impoſſible for the ſoul that is ſenſible of God Almighties favor, to repine at any earthly preſſure. *The Lord is my ſhepherd*, ſaid *David*, *therefore can I lack nothing*, Pſal. 23. 1. And, *thou haſt put gladneſs into my heart, more than when their corn and wine, and oil increaſed*, Pſal. 4. 7. and in paſſionate raptures he cries out, Plal. 73. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire in compariſon of thee. My fleſh and my heart faileth: but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* And likewiſe Pſal. 46. 1. *God is our hope and ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, tho' the earth be moved: and tho' the hills be carried into the midſt of the ſea. Tho' the waters thereof rage and ſwell, and tho' the mountains ſhake at the tempeſt of the ſame.* If God *be in the midſt of us, we ſhall not be remov'd, he will help us, and that right early.* Let us therefore poſſeſs our ſelves of this ſupport, and as the Prophet adviſes, Iſa. 8. 12. *neither fear, nor be afraid*, in any exigence how great ſoever; but *be ſtill and quiet, and ſanctify the Lord of hoſts himſelf, and let him be our fear, and let him be our dread.*

FINIS.

THE

THE

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THE
LIVELY ORACLES
GIVEN TO US,
OR THE
CHRISTIANS BIRTH-RIGHT
And Duty in the cuſtody and uſe of the
HOLY SCRIPTURE.

THE

PREFACE.

IN the Treatiſe of the Government of the Tongue publiſht by me heretofore, I had occaſion to take notice among the exorbitancies of that unruly part, which ſets on fire the whole courſe of nature, and its ſelf is ſet on fire from hell, *James* 3. 6. *of the impious vanity prevailing in this Age, whereby men play with ſacred things, and exerciſe their wit upon thoſe Scriptures by which they ſhall* be judg'd at the laſt day, *John* 12. 48.

The incidental reflections in the treatiſe of the Government of the Tongue, of the abuſe of Scripture,

But that holy Book not only ſuffering by the petulancy of the Tongue, but the malice of the heart, out of the abundance whereof the mouth ſpeakes, *Matt.* 12. 34. *and alſo from that irreligion, prepoſſeſſion, and ſupineſs which the purſuit of ſenſual pleſures certainly produces; the miſchief is too much diffus'd and deeply rooted to be controul'd by a few caſual reflections. I have therefore thought it neceſſary, both in regard of the dignity and importance of the ſubject, as alſo the prevalence of the oppoſition, to attempt a profeſt and particular vindication of the holy Scriptures, by diſplaying their native excellence and beauty, and enforcing the veneration and obedience that is to be paid unto them.*

were inſufficient againſt ſo prevailing a miſchief.

This I deſign'd to do in my uſual method, by an addreſs to the affections of the Reader; ſoliciting the ſeveral paſſions of love, hope, fear, ſhame and ſorrow, which either the Majeſty of God in his ſublime being, his goodneſs deriv'd to us, or our ingratitude return'd to him, could actuate in perſons not utterly obdurate.

A more particular vindication is deſign'd by an addreſs to affections,

But whereas men, when they have learnt to do amiſs, quickly diſpute and dictate; I found my ſelf concern'd to paſs ſomtimes within the verge of controverſy, and to diſcourſe upon the principles of reaſon, and deductions from Teſtimony, which in the moſt important tranſactions of human life are juſtly taken for evidence. In which whole performance I have ſtudied to avoid the entanglements of Sophiſtry, and the ambition of unintelligible quotations; and kept my ſelf within the reach of the unlearned Chriſtian Reader, to whoſe uſes my labors have bin ever dedicated.

And alſo to Reaſon.

All that I require, is that men would bring as much readineſs to entertain the holy Scriptures, as they do to the reading prophane Authors; I am aſham'd to ſay, as they do to the incentives of vice and folly; nay, to the libels and invectives that are levell'd againſt the Scriptures.

'Tis deſired that men would be as equal in the cauſe of the Scripture, as they are in ſecular concerns.

If I obtain this, I Will make no doubt that I ſhall gain a farther point; that from the peruſal of my imperfect conceptions, the Reader will proceed to the ſtudy of the Scriptures themſelves: there taſt and ſee how gracious the Lord is, *Pſalm* 34. 8. *and, as the Angel commanded Saint* John, *Rev.* 10. 9. eat the Book; *where he will experimentally find the words of* David *verified,* Pſalm 19. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. The Law of the Lord is an undefiled Law, converting the Soul: the teſtimony of the Lord is ſure, and giveth wiſdom to the ſimple. The Statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, and giveth light to the eies. The fear of the Lord is clean and endureth for ever, the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be deſir'd are they than

This will produce this advantageous effect, that the Reader will be led to the ſtudy of the Scriptures themſelves.

gold, yea, than much fine gold, ſweeter alſo than hony and the hony-comb. Moreover by them is thy ſervant taught, and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Moſes in receiving the Law had a brightneſs fixt upon his face, and the Goſpel has the like transfiguring power.

It is ſaid of Moſes, *Ex.* 34. 29. *that having receiv'd the Law from God, and converſt with him in Mount* Sina *forty days together, his face ſhone and had a brightneſs fixt upon it that dazled the beholders; a pledg and ſhort eſſay not only of the appearance at Mount* Tabor, *Matt.* 17. 1. *where at the Transfiguration he again was ſeen in glory: but of that greater and yet future change when he ſhall ſee indeed his God* face to face, *and ſhare his glory unto all eternity. The ſame Divine Goodneſs gives ſtill his Law to every one of us. Let us receive it with due regard and veneration; converſe with him therein, inſtead of forty days, during our whole lives; and ſo anticipate and certainly aſſure our intereſt in that great Transfiguration, when all the Faithful ſhall put off their mortal fleſh,* be tranſlated from glory to glory, *eternally behold their God,* ſee him as he is, *and ſo enjoy him.*

Familiarity is exceedingly apt to aſſimilate, and ſurely none can have ſo great an influence as a converſation with God.

Converſation has every where an aſſimilating power, we are generally ſuch as are the men and books, and buſineſs that we deal with: but ſurely no familiarity has ſo great an influence on Life and Manners, as when men hear God ſpeaking to them in this World. That word which the Apoſtle, Heb. 4. 12. *declares to* be quick and powerful, ſharper than any two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

All other books of curious Arts ſhall be burnt in the general conflagration.

The time will come when all our books, however recommended for ſubtilty of diſcourſe, exactneſs of method, variety of matter, or eloquence of language; when all our curious arts, *like thoſe mention'd* Acts 19. 19. ſhall be brought forth, and burnt before all men: *when the great Book of nature, and* heaven it ſelf ſhall depart as a ſcroul roll'd together, *Rev.* 6. 14. *At which important ſeaſon 'twill be more to purpoſe to have ſtudied well, that is, tranſcrib'd in practice this one Book, than to have run thro' all beſides;* for then the dead, ſmall and great, ſhall ſtand before God, and the Books ſhall be open'd, and another Book ſhall be open'd which is the Book of Life, and the dead ſhall be judg'd out of thoſe things which were written in the Books, according to their works, *Rev.* 20. 12.

They who will not hear Moſes and the Prophets, will be convinc'd by no miracle.

In vain ſhall men allege the want of due conviction, that they did not know how penal it would be, to diſregard the Sanctions of Gods Law, which they would have had enforc'd by immediate miracle; the apparition of one ſent from the other world, who might teſtify of the place of torment. *This expectation the Scripture charges every where with the guilt of tempting God, and indeed it really involves this inſolent propoſal, that the Almighty ſhould be obliged to break his own Laws, that men might be prevailed with to keep his. But ſhould he think fit to comply herein, the condeſcention would be as ſucceſsleſs in the event, as 'tis unreaſonable in the offer. Our Savior aſſures,* that they who hear not *Moſes* and the Prophets, *the inſtructions and commands laid down in holy Scripture, would not be wrought upon by any other method,* would not be perſwaded *by that which they allow for irreſiſtible conviction,* tho' one roſe again from the dead, *Luke* 16. 31.

THE
LIVELY ORACLES
GIVEN TO US,
OR, THE
CHRISTIANS BIRTH-RIGHT
and Duty in the cuſtody and uſe of the
HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Sect. I.

The ſeveral Methods of God's Communicating the Knowledge of Himſelf.

1. GOD, as he is inviſible to humane eyes, ſo is he unfathomable by humane underſtandings; the perfection of his nature, and the impotency of ours, ſetting us at too great a diſtance to have any clear perception of him. Nay, ſo far are we from a full comprehenſion, that we can diſcern nothing at all of him, but by his own light; thoſe diſcoveries he hath been pleas'd to make of himſelf.

The knowledge of God is to be owed to the diſcoveries he makes.

2. Thoſe have been of ſeveral ſorts; The firſt was by infuſion in man's creation, when God interwove into man's very conſtitution and being the notions and apprehenſions of a Deity: and at the ſame inſtant when he breathed into him a living ſoul, impreſt on it that native Religion, which taught him to know and reverence his Creator, which we may call the inſtinct of humanity. Nor were thoſe principles dark and confus'd, but clear and evident, proportionable to the ends they were deſign'd to, which were not only to contemplate the nature, but to do the will of God; practice being even in the ſtate of innocence preferable before an unactive ſpeculation.

The firſt intimation of the Deity was by infuſion at man's creation.

3. But this Light being ſoon eclips'd by *Adam*'s diſobedience, there remain'd to his benighted poſterity only ſome faint glimmerings, which were utterly inſufficient to guide them to their end, without freſh aids, and renew'd manifeſtations of God to them. It pleas'd God therefore to repair this ruin, and by frequent revelations to communicate himſelf to the Patriarchs in the firſt Ages of the World; afterwards to Prophets, and other holy men; till at laſt he revealed himſelf yet more illuſtriouſly *in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 4. 6.

This light being eclipſt by Adam's fall, was ſupplied by revelation.

4. This is the one great comprehenſive revelation wherein all the former were involv'd, and to which they pointed; the whole myſtery of Godlineſs being compriz'd in this of *God*'s being *manifeſted in the fleſh*, and the conſequents thereof, 1 Tim. 3. 16. whereby our Saviour as he effected

Which recapitulates into that great Myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſted in fleſh.

our reconciliation with God by the ſacrifice of his death; ſo he declar'd both that, and all things elſe that it concern'd Man to know in order to bliſs in his doctrine and holy Life. And this *Teacher* being not only *ſent from God*, John 3. 2. but being himſelf God bleſſed for ever; it cannot be that his inſtructions can want any ſupplement. Yet that they might not want atteſtation neither to the incredulous world, he confirm'd them by the repeated miracles of his Life, and by the teſtimony of thoſe who ſaw the more irrefragable conviction of his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion. And that they alſo might not want credit and enforcement, the holy Spirit ſet to his ſeal, and by his miraculous deſcent upon the Apoſtles, both aſſerted their commiſſion, and enabled them for the diſcharge of it, by all gifts neceſſary for the propagating the Faith of Chriſt over the whole world.

This when received, is a truſt to be tranſmitted to poſterity.

5. Theſe were the ways by which God was pleaſed to reveal himſelf to the Forefathers of our Faith, and that not only for their ſakes, but ours alſo, to whom they were to derive thoſe divine dictates they had receiv'd. Saint *Stephen* tells us, thoſe under the Law *receiv'd the lively Oracles* to deliver down to their poſterity, *Acts* 7. 38. And thoſe under the Goſpel, who receiv'd yet more lively Oracles from him who was both the Word, and the Life, did it for the ſame purpoſe; to tranſmit it to us upon whom the ends of the World are come. By this all need of repeated Revelations is ſuperſeded, the faithful deriving of the former, being ſufficient to us for *all things that appertain to life and godlineſs*, 2 Pet. 1. 3.

A means of this conveiance is the vouchſafement of holy Scripture.

6. And for this God (whoſe care is equal for all ſucceſſions of men) hath graciouſly provided, by cauſing Holy Scriptures to be writ; by which he has deriv'd on every ſucceeding Age the illuminations of the former. And for that purpoſe endowed the Writers not only with that moral fidelity requiſite to the truth of hiſtory, but with a Divine Spirit, proportionable to the great deſign of fixing an immutable rule for Faith and Manners. And to give us the fuller ſecurity herein, he has choſen no other Penmen of the New Teſtament, than thoſe who were the firſt oral Promulgers of our Chriſtian Religion; ſo that they have left to us the very ſame doctrine they taught the Primitive Chriſtians; and he that acknowledges them Divinely inſpir'd in what they preach'd, cannot doubt them to be ſo in what they writ. So that we all may enjoy virtually and effectually that wiſh of the devout Father, who deſir'd to be Saint *Paul*'s Auditor: for he that hears any of his Epiſtles read, is as really ſpoke to by S. *Paul*, as thoſe who were within the ſound of his voice. *Thus God, who in times paſt ſpake at ſundry times, and in divers manners to our Fathers by the Prophets, and in the latter days by his Son*, Heb. 1. 1, 2. continues ſtill to ſpeak to us by theſe inſpir'd Writers; and what Chriſt once ſaid to his Diſciples in relation to our preaching, is no leſs true of their Writings: *He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me*, Luke 10. 16. All the contempt that is at any time flung on theſe ſacred Writings, rebounds higher, and finally devolves on the firſt Author of thoſe doctrines, whereof theſe are the Regiſters and Tranſcripts.

The contempt of which is defiance to Almighty God, and moſt unpardonable in Chriſtians.

7. But this is a guilt which one would think peculiar to Infidels and Pagans, and not incident to any who had in their Baptiſm liſted themſelves under Chriſt's banner: yet I fear I may ſay, of the two parties, the Scripture has met with the worſt treatment from the latter. For if we meaſure by the frequency and variety of injuries, I fear the Chriſtians will appear to have out-vied Heathens: theſe bluntly disbelieve them, neglect, nay perhaps ſcornfully deride them. Alas, Chriſtians do this and more; they not only put contempts, but tricks upon the Scripture, wreſt and

diſtort it to juſtifie all their wild fancies,or ſecular deſigns; and ſubborn its Patronage to thoſe things it forbids and tells us that God abhors.

The undervaluing of this holy Book is the moſt univerſal cauſe of the depravation of manners.

8. Indeed ſo many are the abuſes we offer it, that he that conſiders them would ſcarce think we own'd it for the words of a ſenſible man, much leſs of the great omniſcient God. And I believe 'twere hard to aſſign any one ſo comprehenſive and efficacious cauſe of the univerſal depravation of manners, as the diſvaluing of this Divine Book, which was deſign'd to regulate them. It were therefore a work worthy another inſpired writing, to attempt the reſcue of this, and recover it to its juſt eſtimate. Yet alas, could we hope for that, we have ſcoffers who would as well deſpiſe the New as the Old; and like the Husbandmen in the Goſpel, *Matt.* 21. 36. would anſwer ſuch a ſucceſſion of meſſages by repeating the ſame injuries.

Human Oratory cannot hope to ſucceed where Divine has fail'd.

9. To ſuch as theſe 'tis I confeſs vain for man to addreſs, nay 'twere inſolence to expect that humane Oratory would ſucceed where the Divine fails; yet the ſpreading infection of theſe renders it neceſſary to adminiſter antidotes to others. And beſides, tho (God be bleſt) all are not of this form, yet there are many who, tho not arriv'd to this contempt, yet want ſome degrees of that juſt reverence they owe the ſacred Scriptures, who give confus'd general aſſent to them as the word of God, but afford them not a conſideration and reſpect anſwerable to ſuch an acknowledgment. To ſuch as theſe, I ſhall hope it may not be utterly vain to attempt the exciting of thoſe drowſy notions that lie unactive in them; by preſenting them ſome conſiderations concerning the excellence and uſe of the Scripture: which being all but neceſſary conſequences of that principle they are ſuppos'd to own, *viz.* that they are God's word, I cannot much queſtion their aſſent to the ſpeculative part: I wiſh I could as probably aſſure my ſelf of the practic.

This therefore is to be the firſt and principal conſideration.

10. Indeed were there nothing elſe to be ſaid in behalf of holy Writ, but that it is God's Word, that were enough to command the moſt awful regard to it. And therefore it is but juſt we make that the firſt and principal conſideration in our preſent diſcourſe. But then 'tis impoſſible that that can want others to attend it; ſince whatſoever God ſaith, is in all reſpects compleatly good. I ſhall therefore to that of its Divine Original add ſecondly, the conſideration of its ſubject Matter; Thirdly, of its excellent and no leſs diffuſive end and deſign; and fourthly, of its exact propriety and fitneſs to that deſign: which are all ſuch qualifications, that where they concur, nothing more can be requir'd to commend a writing to the eſteem of rational men. And upon all theſe teſts, notwithſtanding the cavil of the Romaniſts and others, whoſe force we ſhall examine with the unhappy iſſue of contrary counſels, this Law of God will be found to anſwer the Pſalmiſt's character, *Pſal.* 19. 7. *The Law of God is perfect:* and 'twill appear that the cuſtody and uſe thereof is the Birth-right and Duty of every Chriſtian. All which ſeverals being faithfully deduced, it will only remain that I add ſuch cautions as will be neceſſary to the due performance of the aforeſaid Duty, and our being in ſome degree render'd perfect, as this Law of God, and the Author thereof himſelf is perfect, *Matt.* 5. 48.

SECT. II.

The Divine Original, Endearments and Authority of the Holy Scriptures.

In humane affairs the principal motive of credibility is the credit of the ſpeaker.

1. MEns judgments are ſo apt to be biaſs'd by their affections, that we often find them readier to conſider who ſpeaks, than what is ſpoken: a temper very unſafe, and the principle of great injuſtice in our inferior tranſactions with men: yet here there are very few of us that can wholly diveſt our ſelves of it, whereas, when we deal with God (in whom alone an implicit faith may ſecurely be repos'd) we are nice and wary, bring our ſcales and meaſures, will take nothing upon his word which holds not weight in our own balance. 'Tis true, he needs not our partiality to be *juſtified in his ſayings*, Pſal. 51. 4. *his words are pure, even as the ſilver, tried ſeven times in the fire*, Pſal. 12. 6. able to paſs the ſtricteſt teſt that right reaſon (truly ſo called) can put them to. Yet it ſhews a great perverſeneſs in our nature, that we who ſo eaſily reſign our underſtandings to fallible men, ſtand thus upon our guard againſt God; make him diſpute for every inch he gains on us; nor will afford him what we daily grant to any credible man, to receive an affirmation upon truſt of his veracity.

When we are commanded to ſearch the Scripture, 'tis in reverence to the meaning, and not the truth of what is ſaid.

2. I am far from contradicting our Saviour's Precept, of *Search the Scriptures, John* 7. or Saint *Paul*'s, of *proving all things*, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 21. we cannot be too induſtrious in our inqueſt after truth, provided we ſtill reſerve to God the deciſive vote, and humbly acquieſce in his ſence, how diſtant ſoever from our own; ſo that when we conſult Scripture (I may add Reaſon either) 'tis not to reſolve us whether God be to be believed or no in what he has ſaid, but whether he hath ſaid ſuch and ſuch things: for if we are convinced he hath, Reaſon as well as Religion commands our aſſent.

Whatever God has ſaid we are to pay it a reverence merely upon the account of its author.

3. Whatever therefore God has ſaid, we are to pay it a reverence merely upon the account of its Author, over and above what the excellence of the matter exacts: and to this we have all inducements as well as obligation: there being no motives to render the words of men eſtimable to us, which are not eminently and tranſcendently appliable to thoſe of God.

He ſpeaks with the authority of a Parent.

4. Thoſe Motives we may reduce to four: firſt, the Authority of the Speaker; ſecondly, his Kindneſs; thirdly, his Wiſdom; and fourthly, his Truth. Firſt, for that of Authority: that may be either native, or acquir'd; the native is that of a Parent, which is ſuch a charm of obſervance, that we ſee *Solomon*, when he would impreſs his counſels, aſſumes the perſon of a Father; *Hear O my children the instructions of a Father*, Prov. 4. 1. And generally thro that whole Book he uſes the compellation of my Son, as the greateſt endearment to engage attention and reverence. Nay ſo indiſpenſible was the obligation of children in this reſpect, that we ſee the contumacious child that would not hearken to the advice of his Parents, was by God himſelf adjudged to death, *Deut.* 21. 20.

The father not only of our perſons, but alſo of our nature.

5. Nor have only Gods but mens Laws exacted that filial reverence to the dictates of Parents. But certainly no Parent can pretend ſuch a title to it as God who is not only the immediate Father of our perſons, but the original Father of our very nature; not only of our fleſh, but of our ſpirits alſo, *Heb.* 12. 9. So that the Apoſtle's Antitheſis in that place is as properly applied to counſels as corrections; and we may as rightly infer, that if we give reverence to the advices of our earthly Parents, *much more ought*

we ſubject our ſelves to this father of our ſpirits. And we have the very ſame reaſon wherewith to enforce it: for *the Fathers of our fleſh do* as often dictate, as *correct according to their pleaſures*, preſcribe to their children not according to the exact meaſures of right and wrong, but after that humor which moſt predominates in themſelves. But God always directs his admonitions to our profit, *that we be partakers of his holineſs*, *Heb.* 12. 11. So that we are as unkind to our ſelves, as irreverent towards him, whenever we let any of his words fall to the ground; whoſe claim to this part of our reverence is much more irrefragable than that of our natural Parents.

He has beſides, the authority of a King, and Prince.

6. But beſides this native Authority there is alſo an acquired; and that we may diſtinguiſh into two ſorts: the one of dominion, the other of reputation. To the firſt kind belong that of Princes, Magiſtrates, Maſters, or any that have coercive power over us. And our own intereſt teaches us not to ſlight the words of any of theſe, who can ſo much to our coſt ſecond them with deeds. Now God has all theſe titles of juriſdiction; He is the great King, *Pſal.* 48. 2. Nor was it only a complement of the Pſalmiſts; for himſelf owns the ſtile, *I am a great King*, Mal. 1. *He is the Judge of all the World*, Gen. 18. yea that *Ancient of days*, before whom the Books were open'd, *Dan.* 7. 10. He is our Lord and Maſter by right, both of Creation and Redemption; and this Chriſt owns even in his ſtate of inanition; yea, when he was about the moſt ſervile employment, the waſhing of his Diſciples feet, when he was moſt literally in the form of a ſervant; yet he ſcruples not to aſſert his right to that oppoſite title: *You call me Maſter, and Lord; and ye ſay well, for ſo I am*; *Joh.* 13. Nor are theſe empty names, but effectively attended with all the power they denote. Yet ſo ſtupid are we, that whilſt we awfully receive the dictates of our earthly Superiors, we ſlight and neglect the Oracles of that God who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. When a Prince ſpeaks, we are apt to cry out with *Herod*'s Flatterers, *The voice of a God, and not of a man*, *Acts* 12. Yet when it is indeed the voice of God, we chuſe to liſten to any thing elſe rather than it. But let us ſadly remember, that notwithſtanding our contempts, this word ſhall (as our Saviour tells us) *judge us at the laſt day*, *John* 12. 48.

Of his inherent excellencies.

7. A ſecond ſort of acquir'd Authority is that of reputation. When a man is fam'd for ſome extraordinary excellences, whether moral or intellectual, men come with appetites to his diſcourſes, greedily ſuck them in, nor need ſuch a one beſpeak attention; his very name has done it for him, and prepoſſeſt him of his Auditors regard. Thus the Rabbies among the Jews, the Philoſophers among the Greeks, were liſtened to as Oracles, and to cite them was (by their admiring Diſciples) thought a concluding Argument. Nay, under Chriſtianity, this admiration of mens perſons has been ſo inordinate, that it has crumbled Religion away in little inſignificant parties; whilſt not only *Paul*, *Apollo* or *Cephas*, but names infinitely inferior, have become the diſtinctive characters of Sects and ſeparate Communions. So eaſily alas are we charm'd by our prepoſſeſſions, and with itching ears run in queſt of thoſe doctrines, which the fame of their Authors, rather than the evidence of truth, commends to us.

And where theſe motives all concurr, there obligation is ſo much the greater.

8. And hath God done nothing to get a repute among us? has he no excellencies to deſerve our eſteem? is he not worthy to preſcribe to his own creatures? If we think yes, why is he the only perſon to be diſregarded? or why do we ſo unſeaſonably depart from our own humor, as not to give his Word a reverence proportionable to that we pretend for him; nay, which we actually pay to men of like paſſions with our ſelves? A contempt ſo abſurd as well as impious, that we have not the example of any

the moſt barbarous people to countenance us. For tho ſome of them have made very wild miſtakes in the choice of their Deities, yet they have all agreed in this common principle, that whatever thoſe Deities ſaid, was to be receiv'd with all poſſible veneration; yea, ſuch a deference gave they to all ſignifications of the Divine Will, that as they would undertake no great enterprize without conſulting their Auguries; ſo upon any inauſpicious ſigns they relinquiſht their attempts. And certainly if we had the ſame reverence for the true God which they had for the falſe, we ſhould as frequently conſult him. We may do it with much more eaſe and certainty: we need not truſt to the entrails of Beaſts, or motion of Birds: we need not go to *Delphos*, or the Libyan *Hammon* for the reſolving our doubts: but what *Moſes* ſaid to *Iſrael* is very applicable to us, *the Word is nigh thee*, *Deut.* 30. 14. That Word which *David* made his *Counſellor*, *Pſal.* 119. 24. his *Comforter*, ver. 50. his *Treaſure*, ver. 72. his *Study*, ver. 99. And had we thoſe awful apprehenſions of God which he had, we ſhould pay the like reverence to his Word. Did we well ponder how many titles of Authority he has over us, we ſhould ſurely be aſham'd to deny that reſpect to him in whom they all conſpire, which we dare not deny to them ſeparately in human Superiors.

A ſecond motive for the eſteem of words is the kindneſs of the ſpeaker.

9. A ſecond motive to eſteem mens words, is the kindneſs of the ſpeaker. This has ſuch a faſcinating power, as nothing but extreme ill nature can reſiſt. When a man is aſſur'd of the kindneſs of him that ſpeaks, whatever is ſpoken is taken in good part. This is it that diſtinguiſhes the admonitions of a friend from the reproaches of an enemy; and we daily in common converſation receive thoſe things with contentment and applauſe from an intimate and familiar, which if ſpoken by a ſtranger or enemy, would be deſpis'd or ſtomach'd. So inſinuating a thing is kindneſs, that where it has once got it ſelf believ'd, nothing it ſaies after is diſputed; it ſupples the mind, and makes it ductile and pliant to any impreſſions.

Human kindneſs bears no proportion to the Divine.

10. But what human kindneſs is there that can come in any competition with the Divine? it ſurpaſſes that of the neareſt and deareſt relations; *Mothers may forget, yet will I not forget thee*, Iſa. 49. 15. And the Pſalmiſt found it experimentally true, *When my Father and my Mother forſake me, the Lord taketh me up*, Pſal. 27. 10. The tendereſt bowels compared to his, are adamant and flint: ſo that 'tis a moſt proper Epithet the Wiſe Man gives him, *O Lord, Thou lover of Souls*, Wiſd. 11. 26. Nor is this affection merely mental, but it atteſts it ſelf by innumerable effects. The effects of love are all reducible to two heads, doing and ſuffering; and by both theſe God has moſt eminently atteſted his love to us.

Whether we conſider our ſouls or bodies, our creation or redemption.

11. For the firſt, we cannot look either on our bodies or our ſouls, on the whole Univerſe about us, or that better World above us; but we ſhall in each ſee *the Lord hath done great things for us*, Pſal. 114. Nay, not only our enjoyments, but even the capacity to enjoy, is his bounty. Had not he drawn mankind out of his original clay, what had we been concern'd in all the other works of his Creation? So that if we put any value either upon what we have or what we are, we cannot but account our ſelves ſo much indebted to this his active love. And tho the paſſive was not practicable by the Divine Nature ſimply and apart, yet that we might not want all imaginable evidences of his love, he who was God bleſſed for ever, linkt his impaſſible to our paſſible nature; aſſum'd our humanity, that he might eſpouſe our ſorrows, and was born on purpoſe that he might die for us. So that ſure we may ſay in his own words, *greater love than this hath no man*, John 15. 13.

And 'tis very hard if ſuch obligations cannot reſcue his word from contempt.

12. And now 'tis very hard, if ſuch an unparallell'd love in God may not as much affect us, as the ſlight benefactions of every ordinary friend, if it cannot ſo much recommend him to our regard, as to reſcue his word from contempt, and diſpoſe us to receive impreſſions from it; eſpecially when his very ſpeaking is a new act of his kindneſs, and deſign'd to our greateſt advantage.

We pay a reſpect to a friends diſcourſe, tho weak and irrational, which cannot happen in God.

13. But if all he has done and ſuffer'd for us cannot obtain him ſo much from us, we muſt ſurely confeſs, our diſingenuity is as ſuperlative as his love. For in this inſtance we have no plea for our ſelves. The diſcourſes of Men, 'tis true, may ſometimes be ſo weak and irrational, that tho kindneſs may ſuggeſt pity, it cannot reverence: but this can never happen in God, whoſe Wiſdom is as infinite as his love. He talks not at our vain rate who often talk only for talking ſake: but his words are directed to the moſt important ends, and addreſt in ſuch a manner as befits him in whom are *all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*, Col. 2. 3. And this is our third conſideration, the wiſdom of the ſpeaker.

Humane Wiſdom can attract ſcholars and admirers, which has no value if compar'd with God's.

14. How attractive a thing Wiſdom is, we may obſerve in the inſtance of *the Queen of Sheba*, who *came from the utmoſt parts of the earth*, as Chriſt ſaies, Matth. 12. 42. *to hear the Wiſdom of Solomon*. And the like is noted of the *Greek* Sages, that they were addreſt to from all parts, by perſons of all ranks and qualities, to hear their Lectures. And indeed the rational nature of man does by a kind of Sympathetick motion cloſe with whatever hath the ſtamp of reaſon upon it. But alas, what is the profoundeſt Wiſdom of Men, compar'd with that of God? He is the eſſential reaſon; and all that Man can pretend to, is but an emanation from him; a ray of his Sun, a drop of his Ocean: which as he gives, ſo he can alſo take away. He can infatuate the moſt ſubtle Deſigners; and (as he ſaies of himſelf) *makes the diviners mad, turns the wiſe men back, and makes their wiſdom fooliſhneſs*, Iſaiah 44. 25.

'Tis impious folly to idolize humane wiſdom and deſpiſe Divine.

15. How impious a folly is it then in us, to Idolize humane Wiſdom with all its imperfections, and deſpiſe the Divine? yet this every man is guilty of who is not attracted to the ſtudy of ſacred Writ by the ſupereminent wiſdom of its Author. For ſuch men muſt either affirm that God has not ſuch a ſupereminency; or that, tho he has in himſelf, he hath not exerted it in this Writing: the former is down-right blaſphemy; and truly the latter is the ſame, a little varied. For that any thing but what is exactly wiſe, can proceed from infinite Wiſdom, is too abſurd for any Man to imagine. And therefore he that charges God's Word with defect of Wiſdom, muſt interpretatively charge God ſo too. For tho 'tis true, a wiſe Man may ſometimes ſpeak fooliſhly; yet that happens thro that mixture of ignorance or paſſion, which is in the moſt knowing of mortals: but in God, who is a pure Act, and eſſential Wiſdom, that is an impoſſible ſuppoſition.

That Word which is intended to make wiſe to ſalvation.

16. Nay, indeed it were to tax him of folly beyond what is incident to any ſenſible Man, who will ſtill proportion his inſtruments to the work he deſigns. Should we not conclude him mad, that ſhould attempt to fell a mighty Oak with a Pen-knife, or ſtop a Torrent with a wiſp of ſtraw? And ſure their conceptions are not much more reverend of God, who can ſuppoſe that a writing deſign'd by him for ſuch important ends, as the *making men wiſe unto ſalvation*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. *the caſting down all that exalts it ſelf againſt the obedience of Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 10. 5. ſhould it ſelf be fooliſh and weak: or that he ſhould give it thoſe Attributes of being *ſharper than a two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing a-ſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, of*

the joints and marrow, Heb. 4. 12. if its diſcourſes were ſo flat and inſipid, as ſome in this profane Age would repreſent them.

Tho it pretends not to teach the wiſdom of this world, it guides in a better.

17. 'Tis true indeed, 'tis not, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, the *wiſdom of this world*, 1 Cor. 2. 6. The Scripture teaches us not the Arts of undermining Governments, defrauding and circumventing our Brethren; but it teaches us that which would tend much more even to our temporal felicity; and as reaſon prompts us to aſpire to Happineſs, ſo it muſt acknowledge, that is the higheſt wiſdom which teaches us to attain it.

The Scripture is recommended alſo by the veracity of its Author.

18. And as the holy Scripture is thus recommended to us by the Wiſdom of its Author, ſo in the laſt place it is by his truth, without which the other might rather raiſe our jealouſy than our reverence. For Wiſdom without ſincerity degenerates into ſerpentine guile, and we rather fear to be enſnar'd than hope to be advantag'd by it. The moſt ſubtile addreſſes, and moſt cogent arguments prevail not upon us, where we ſuſpect ſome inſidious deſign. But where wiſdom and fidelity meet in the ſame perſon, we do not only attend, but confide in his counſels. And this qualification is moſt eminently in God. *The children of men are deceitful upon the weights*, Pſal. 62. 9. Much guile often lurks indiſcernibly under the faireſt appearances; but God's veracity is as eſſentially himſelf as his wiſdom, and he can no more deceive us, than he can be deceiv'd himſelf. *He is not a man that he ſhould lie*, Num. 23. 19. He deſigns not as (men often do) to ſport himſelf with our credulity, and raiſe hopes which he never means to ſatisfy: *he ſays not to the ſeed of Jacob, ſeek ye me in vain*, Iſa. 45. 19. but all his *promiſes are Yea and Amen*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. He is perfectly ſincere in all the propoſals he makes in his word, which is a moſt rational motive for us to advert it, not only with reverence but love.

We muſt be very inexcuſable, if ſo many motives combin'd cannot prevail with us.

19. And now when all theſe motives are thus combin'd, the authority, the kindneſs, the wiſdom, the veracity of the ſpeaker, what can be requir'd more to render his words of weight with us? if this our fourfold cord will not draw us, we have ſure the ſtrength, not of men but of that Legion we read of in the Goſpel, *Mark* 5. 9. For theſe are ſo much the cords of a man, ſo adapted to our natures, nay to our conſtant uſage in other things, that we muſt put off much of our humanity, diſclaim the common meaſures of mankind, if we be not attracted by them. For I dare appeal to the breaſt of any ſober, induſtrious man, whether in caſe a perſon, who he were ſure had all the foremention'd qualifications, ſhould recommend to him ſome rules as infallible for the certain doubling or trebling his eſtate, he would not think them worth the purſuing; nay, whether he would not plod and ſtudy on them, till he comprehended the whole Art. And ſhall we then when God, in whom all theſe qualifications, are united, and that in their utmoſt tranſcendencies, ſhall we, I ſay, think him below our regard, when he propoſes the improving our intereſt, not by the ſcanty proportions of two or three; but in ſuch as he intimated to *Abraham*, when he ſhew'd him the Stars, as the repreſentative of his numerous off-ſpring *Gen.* 15. 5. when he teaches us that higheſt, and yet moſt certain Alchymy of refining and multiplying our enjoyments, and then perpetuating them?

In ſecular occaſions we are more eaſie, if one comes in his own name, him we receive.

20. All this God does in Scripture, and we muſt be ſtupidly improvident, if we will take no advantage by it. It was once the complaint of Chriſt to the *Jews*, *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another ſhall come in his own name, him ye will receive*, Joh. 5. 43. And what was ſaid by him the Eternal eſſential Word, is no leſs applicable to the Written; which coming in the name and upon the meſſage of God, is deſpis'd and ſlighted, and every the lighteſt compoſure of men preferr'd before it; As

if that ſignature of Divinity it carries, ſerved rather for a Brand to ſtigmatize and defame, than adorn and recommend it. A contempt which ſtrikes immediately at God himſelf, whoſe reſentments of it, tho for the preſent ſuppreſt by his long-ſuffering, will at laſt break out upon all who perſevere ſo to affront him in a *judgment worthy of God*, Wiſd. 12. 26.

To ſuppoſe and take as granted the Divine Original of the Holy Scripture; is thought to be begging the queſtion.

21. But after all that has been ſaid, I foreſee ſome may ſay, that I have all this while but beaten the air, have built upon a principle which ſome flatly deny, others doubt of, and have run away with a ſuppoſition that the Bible is of Divine Original, without any attempt of proof. To ſuch as theſe I might juſtly enough object the extream hard meaſure they offer to Divinity above all other Sciences. For in thoſe they ſtill allow ſome fundamental maxims, which are preſuppoſed without proof; but in this they admit of no *Poſtulata*, no granted principle on which to ſuperſtruct. If the ſame rigour ſhould be extended to ſecular caſes, what a damp would it ſtrike upon commerce? For example, a man expects fair dealing from his neighbours upon the ſtrength of thoſe common notions of Juſtice he preſumes writ in all Men's hearts: but according to this meaſure, he muſt firſt prove to every man he deals with, that ſuch notions there are, and that they are obligatory: that the wares expos'd to ſale are his own; that Dominion is not founded in Grace, or that he is in that ſtate, and ſo has a property to confer upon another; that the perſon dealt with, pays a juſt price; does it in good money; and that it is his own; or that he is in the ſtate of Grace; or need not to be ſo to juſtify his purchaſe, and at this rate the Market will be as full of nice queſtions as the Schools. But becauſe complaints and retortions are the common refuge of cauſes that want better Arguments, I ſhall not inſiſt here; but proceed to a defence of the queſtion'd Aſſertion, that the Bible is the Word of God.

That the Bible is the Word of God, is evinc'd by ſeveral ways of proof.

22. In which I ſhall proceed by theſe degrees. Firſt I ſhall lay down the plain grounds upon which Chriſtians believe it. Secondly, I ſhall compare thoſe with thoſe of leſs credibility, which have generally ſatisfied mankind in other things of the like nature. And Thirdly, I ſhall conſider whether thoſe who are diſſatisfied with thoſe grounds, would not be equally ſo with any other way of atteſtation.

Such as are to be expected in matters of fact.

23. Before I enter upon the firſt of theſe, I deſire it may be conſider'd, that matters of fact are not capable of ſuch rigorous demonſtrative evidences, as mathematical propoſitions are. To render a thing fit for rational belief, there is no more to be requir'd, but that the motives for it do over-poiſe thoſe againſt it; and in that degree they do ſo, ſo is the belief ſtronger or weaker.

Which can only be proved by Teſtimony.

24. Now the motives of our belief in the preſent caſe, are ſuch as are extrinſic, or intrinſick to the Scriptures; of which the extrinſic are firſt, and preparative to the other; and indeed all that can reaſonably be inſiſted on to a gain-ſayer, who muſt be ſuppos'd no competent judge of the latter. But as to the forms, I ſhall adventure to ſay, that the Divine Original of the Scripture hath as great grounds of credibility as can be expected in any things of this kind. For whether God inſpir'd the Penmen of Holy Writ, is matter of Fact, and being ſo, is capable of no other external evidence but that of teſtimony: and that matter of fact being alſo in point of time ſo remote from us, can be judg'd of only by a ſeries of Teſtimonies deriv'd from that Age, wherein the Scriptures were written to this: and the more credible the Teſtifiers, and the more univerſal the teſtimony; ſo much the more convincing are they to all conſidering men.

Which atteſtation the Scripture hath with great advantage.

25. And this atteſtation the Scripture hath in the higheſt circumſtances, it having been witneſſed to in all Ages, and in thoſe Ages by all perſons that could be preſum'd to know any thing of it. Thus the Old Teſtament was own'd by the whole Nation of the *Jews*, as the writings of men inſpir'd by God, and that with ſuch evidence of their miſſion, as abundantly ſatisfy'd thoſe of that Age, of their being ſo inſpir'd; and they deriv'd thoſe Writings with that atteſtation to their poſterity. Now, that thoſe of the firſt Ages were not deceiv'd, is as morally certain as any thing can be ſuppos'd. For in the firſt part of the Bible is contain'd the hiſtory of thoſe miracles wherewith God reſcued that people out of *Egypt*, and inſtated them in *Canaan*. Now, if they who liv'd at that time knew that ſuch miracles never were done, 'tis impoſſible they could receive an evident Fable as an inſpir'd Truth. No ſingle perſon, much leſs a whole Nation, can be ſuppos'd ſo ſtupid. But if indeed they were eye-witneſſes of thoſe miracles, they might with very good reaſon conclude, that the ſame *Moſes* who was impower'd by God to work them, was ſo alſo for the relating them; as alſo all thoſe precedent events from the Creation down to that time, which are recorded by him.

Particularly the Law of Moſes.

26. So alſo for the preceptive parts of thoſe Books, thoſe that ſaw thoſe formidable ſolemnities, with which they were firſt publiſhed, had ſure little temptation to doubt that they were the dictates of God, when written. Now, if they could not be deceiv'd themſelves, 'tis yet leſs imaginable that they could conſpire to impoſe a cheat upon their poſterities; nor indeed were the *Jews* of ſo eaſie a credulity, that 'tis at all probable the ſucceeding Generations would have been ſo impos'd on: their humour was ſtubborn enough, and the precepts of their Law ſevere and burdenſom enough to have tempted them to have caſt off the yoke, had it not been bound upon them by irreſiſtible convictions of its coming from God. But beſides this Tradition of their Elders, they had the advantage of living under a Theocracy, the immediate guidance of God; Prophets daily rais'd up among them to foretell events, to admoniſh them of their duty, and reprove their backſlidings: yet even theſe gave the deference to the written Word; nay, made it the teſt by which to try true inſpirations from falſe: *To the Law and to the Teſtimony: if they ſpeak not according to it, there is no light in them*, Iſa. 8. 20. So that the veneration which they had before acquir'd, was ſtill anew excited by freſh inſpirations, which both atteſted the old, and became new parts of their Canon.

And Prophetical writings, who have a great confirmation, by their completion and the care of the Jews in the cuſtody of the Scripture, and the many verſions are farther ſepiments.

27. Nor could it be eſteem'd a ſmall confirmation to the Scriptures, to find in ſucceding Ages the ſignal accompliſhments of thoſe Prophecies which were long before regiſtred in thoſe Books: for nothing leſs than Divine Power and Wiſdom could foretell, and alſo verify them. Upon theſe grounds the *Jews* univerſally through all ſucceſſions received the Books of the Old Teſtament as Divine Oracles, and look'd upon them as the greateſt truſt that could be committed to them: and accordingly were ſo ſcrupulouſly vigilant in conſerving them, that their *Maſorits* numbred not only the ſections, but the very words, nay letters, that no fraud, or inadvertency might corrupt, or defalk the leaſt iota of what they eſteem'd ſo ſacred. A farther teſtimony and ſepiment to which, were the Samaritan, Chaldee, and Greek verſions: which being made uſe of in the Synagogues of *Jews*, in their diſperſions, and the *Samaritans* at *Sichem*, could not at thoſe diſtances receive an uniform alteration, and any other would be of no effect. Add to this, that the Original exemplar of the Law was laid up in the Sanctuary, that the Prince was to have a Copy of it alwaies by him, and

tranſcribe it with his own hand; that every *Jew* was to make it his conſtant diſcourſe and Meditation, teach it his children, and wear part of it upon his hands and forehead. And now ſure 'tis impoſſible to imagine any matter of fact to be more carefully deduced, or irrefragably teſtified, nor any thing believed upon ſtronger evidence.

The Jews of the preſent age are a farther evidence.

28. That all this is true in reference to the *Jews*, that they did thus own theſe Writings as Divine, appears not only by the records of paſt Ages, but by the *Jews* of the preſent, who ſtill own them, and cannot be ſuſpected of combination with the *Chriſtians*. And if theſe were reaſonable grounds of conviction to the *Jews*, (as he muſt be more abſurdly ſceptical that ſhall deny) they muſt be ſo to *Chriſtians* alſo, who derive them from them: and that with this farther advantage to our Faith, that we ſee the clear completion of thoſe Evangelical Prophecies, which remain'd dark to them, and conſequently have a farther Argument to confirm us, that the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament are certainly Divine.

The New Teſtament has the like means of probation aſſerted at firſt by Miracle.

29. The new has alſo the like means of probation: which as it is a collection of the Doctrine taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, muſt, if truly related, be acknowledged no leſs divine than what they orally deliver'd. So that they who doubt his being Divine, muſt either deny what Chriſt and his Apoſtles preach'd to be ſo, or elſe diſtruſt the fidelity of the relation: the former ſtrikes at the whole Chriſtian Faith; which if only of men, muſt not only be fallible, but is actually a deceit, whilſt it pretends to be of God, and is not. To ſuch objectors, we have to oppoſe thoſe ſtupendous Miracles with which the Goſpel was atteſted; ſuch as demonſtrated a more than human efficacy. And that God ſhould lend his Omnipotence to abet the falſe pretentions of men, is a conceit too unworthy even for the worſt of men to entertain.

Which are above the pretences of impoſtors.

30. 'Tis true, there have been by God permitted lying miracles, as well as true ones have been done by him; ſuch as were thoſe of the Magicians in *Egypt*, in oppoſition to the other of *Moſes*; but then the difference between both was ſo conſpicuous, that he muſt be more partial and diſingenuous, than even thoſe Magicians were, who would not acknowledge the diſparity, and confeſs in thoſe which were truly ſupernatural, *the finger of God*, Exod. 8. 19. Therefore both in the old and new Teſtament it is predicted, that *falſe Prophets ſhould ariſe, and do ſigns and wonders*, Deut. 13. 1. Matt. 24. 11. 24. as a trial of their fidelity, who made profeſſion of Religion; whether they would prefer the few and trivial ſlights which recommended a deceiver, before thoſe great and numberleſs Miracles which atteſted the ſacred Oracles deliver'd to the ſons of men by the God of truth. Whether the trick of a *Barchochebas*, to hold fire in his mouth; that of *Marcus* the Heretic, to make the Wine of the holy Sacrament appear blood; or that of *Mahomet*, to bring a Pigen to his ear, ought to be put in balance againſt all the miracles wrought by *Moſes*, our Saviour, or his Apoſtles. And in a word; whether the ſilly ſtories which *Jamblichus* ſolemnly relates of *Pythagoras*, or thoſe *Philoſtratus* tells of *Apollonius Tyanæus*, deſerve to rival thoſe of the Evangeliſts. It is a moſt juſt judgment, and accordingly threatned by Almighty God, that they who wonld *no believe the truth, ſhould believe a lye*, 2 *Theſſ*. 2. 11. But ſtill the Almighty, *where any man* or devil *doth proudly, is* evidently *above him*, Exod. 18. 11. *will be juſtified in his ſayings, and be clear when he is judged*, Rom. 3. 4.

The Witneſſes of the firſt Miracles of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, were credible.

31. But if men will be Scepticks, and doubt every thsng, they are to know that the matter call'd into queſtion, is of a nature that admits but two ways of ſolution; Probability and Teſtimony. Firſt for Probability, Let it be conſider'd who were the firſt Promulgers of Chriſt's Mi-

racles. In his life-time they were either the patients, on whom his miracles were wrought, or the common People that were ſpectators: the former as they could not be deceiv'd themſelves, but muſt needs know whether they were cur'd or no; ſo what imaginable deſign could they have to deceive others; many indeed have pretended impotency as a motive of compaſſion; but what could they gain by owning a cure they had not? As for the ſpectators, as their multitude adds to their credibility, (it being morally impoſſible that ſo many ſhould at once be deluded in a matter ſo obvious to their ſenſes) ſo does it alſo acquit them from fraud and combination. Cheats and forgeries are always hatcht in the dark, in cloſe Cabals and private Juncto's. That five thouſand men at one time, and four thouſand at another ſhould conſpire to ſay, that they were miraculouſly fed, when they were not; and all prove true to the fiction, and not betray it, is a thing as irrational to be ſuppos'd, as impoſſible to be parallell'd.

Had no end to tempt to forgery.

32. Beſides, admit it poſſible that ſo many could have joyn'd in the deceit, yet what imaginable end could they have in it? Had their lie been ſubſervient to the deſigns of ſome potent Prince that might have rewarded it, there had been ſome temptation: but what could they expect from the reputed ſon of a Carpenter, who had not himſelf where to lay his head? Nay, who diſclaim'd all ſecular power; convey'd himſelf away from their importunities, when they would have forc'd him to be a King: and conſequently, could not be lookt on as one that would head a ſedition, or attempt to raiſe himſelf to a capacity of rewarding his Abetters. Upon all theſe conſiderations there appears not the leaſt ſhadow of probability, that either thoſe particular perſons who publiſh'd the cures they had receiv'd, or thoſe multitudes who were witneſſes and divulgers of thoſe, or his other miracles, could do it upon any ſiniſter deſign, or indeed upon any other motive, but gratitude and admiration.

But all ſecular motives to engage their ſilence.

33. In the next place, if we come to thoſe miracles which ſucceeded Chriſt's death, thoſe moſt important, and convincing, of his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, and obſerve who were the divulgars of thoſe, we ſhall find them very unlikely to be men of deſign; a ſet of illiterate men, taken from the Fiſher-boats, and other mean occupations: and ſuch as needed a miracle as great as any of thoſe they were to aſſert (the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt) to fit them for their office. What alas could they drive at, or how could they hope that their teſtimony could be receiv'd, ſo much againſt the humour and intereſt of the preſent Rulers; unleſs they were aſſur'd not only of the truth of the things, but alſo of ſome ſupernatural aids, to back and fortify them? Accordingly we find, that till they had receiv'd thoſe; till by the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, they were *endued with power from on high*, Luke 24. 49. they never attempted the diſcovery of what they had ſeen: but rather hid themſelves, kept all their aſſemblies in privacy and concealment, *for fear of the Jews*, John 20. 19. and ſo were far enough from projecting any thing beſides their own ſafety. Afterwards, when they began to preach, they had early eſſays, what their ſecular advantages would be by it; threatnings and revilings, ſcourgings and impriſonments, *Acts* 4. 21. 5. 18, 40. And can it be imagin'd, that men who a little before had ſhew'd themſelves ſo little in love with ſuffering, that none of them durſt ſtick to their Maſter at his apprehenſion, but one forſwore, and all forſook him; can it I ſay, be imagin'd that theſe men ſhould be ſo much in love with their own Fable, as to venture all ſorts of perſecution for the propagating it? Or if they could, let us in the next place conſider what probability there could be of ſucceſs.

34. Their

Their preaching oppos'd by the Roman and Jewiſh rulers.

34. Their preaching amounting to no leſs than the Deifying of one, whom both their Roman and Jewiſh Rulers; nay, the generality of the people had executed as a malefactor: ſo that they were all engaged, in defence of their own Act, to ſift their teſtimony with all the rigour that conſcious jealouſy could ſuggeſt. And where were ſo many concern'd inquiſitors, there was very little hope for a forgery to paſs. Beſides the avow'd diſpleaſure of their Governors made it a hazardous thing to own a belief of what they aſſerted. Thoſe that adher'd to them could not but know, that at the ſame time they muſt eſpouſe their dangers and ſufferings. And men uſe not to incurr certain miſchiefs, upon doubtful and ſuſpicious grounds.

And all ſecular intereſts of their Auditors.

35. Yet father, their doctrine was deſign'd to an end to which their Auditors could not but have the greateſt reluctancy: they were to ſtruggle with that rooted prepoſſeſſion which the Jews had for the Moſaical Law, which their Goſpel outdated; and the Gentiles for the Rites and Religion of their Anceſtors; and, which was harder than either, with the corruptions and vices of both: to plant humility and internal ſanctity, ſo contrary to that ceremonial holineſs, upon which the Jews ſo valued themſelves, and deſpiſ'd others: and Temperance, Juſtice, and Purity, ſo contrary to the practice, nay, even the Religion of the Heathen; and to attempt all this with no other allurement, no other promiſe of recompence but what they muſt attend in another world, and paſs too through reproaches and inflictions, torments and death. Theſe were all ſuch invincible prejudices as they could never hope to break thorow with a lie; nay, which they could not have encounter'd even with every common truth, but only with that, which being divine, brought its aids with it; without which 'twas utterly impoſſible for all the skill or oratory of men to overcome ſuch diſadvantages.

The ſucceſs of their preaching is a farther evidence in its behalf.

36. And yet with all theſe did theſe rude inartificial men conteſt, and that with ſignal ſucceſs: no leſs than three thouſand Proſelytes made by Saint *Peter*'s firſt Sermon; and that in *Jeruſalem*, the Scene where all was acted and conſequently where 'twas the moſt impoſſible to impoſe a forgery. And at the like miraculous rate they went on, till as the Phariſees themſelves complain, they had *filled Jeruſalem with their Doctrine*, Acts 5.28. nor did *Judea* ſet bounds to them, *their ſound went out into all Nations*, Rom. 10.18. and their Doctrine ſpread it ſelf through all the Gentile world.

Which ſhews that there was more than man in it.

37. And ſure ſo wonderful an event, ſo contrary to human meaſures, do's ſufficiently evince there was more than man in it. Nothing but the ſame creative Power that produc'd light out of darkneſs, could bring forth effects ſo much above the proportion of the cauſe. Had theſe weak inſtruments acted only by their natural powers, nothing of this had been atchiev'd. Alaſs could theſe poor rude men learn all Languages within the ſpace of fifty days, which would take up almoſt as many years of the moſt induſtrious Student, and yet had they not been able to ſpeak them, they could never have divulg'd the Goſpel to the ſeveral Nations, nor ſo effectually have convinc'd the by-ſtanders, *Acts* 2. that they acted by a higher impulſe. And to convince the world they did ſo, they repeated their Maſters miracles as well as his doctrine; heal'd the ſick, caſt out devils, raiſ'd the dead. And where God communicated ſo much of his power, we may reaſonably conclude he did it to promote his own work, not the work of the Devil, as it muſt have been if this whole Scene were a lie.

Notwithſtanding all credit of Hiſtory, ſome are ſo impudent to ſuggeſt that Religion is a lately deviſed Fable.

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the writings of men inſpir'd by God: ſo it was alſo contended for even unto death; and to part with the Bible was to renounce the Faith. And now, after ſuch a cloud of Teſtimonies, we may ſure take up that (ill-applied) ſaying of the high Prieſt, *Matt. 26. 65. What farther need have we of Witneſſes.*

There are beſides external, internal evidences in behalf of the Scripture.

44. Yet beſides theſe, another ſort of witneſſes there are, I mean thoſe intrinſick evidences which ariſe out of the ſcripture it ſelf; but of theſe I think not proper here to inſiſt, partly becauſe the ſubject will be in a great degree coincident with that of the ſecond general conſideration; and partly becauſe theſe can be argumentative to none who are not qualified to diſcern them. Let thoſe who doubt the Divine Original of Scripture, well digeſt the former grounds which are within the verge of reaſon; and when by thoſe they are brought to read it with due reverence, they will not want Arguments from Scripture it ſelf to confirm their veneration of it.

It is farther aſſerted by the common meaſures of credibility.

45. In the mean time, to evince how proper the former diſcourſe is to found a rational belief that the Scripture is the word of God, I ſhall compare it with thoſe meaſures of credibility upon which all human tranſactions move, and upon which men truſt their greateſt concerns without diffidence or diſpute.

The promulgation of laws, and notices of commerce.

46. That we muſt in many things truſt the report of others, is ſo neceſſary, that without it human ſociety cannot ſubſiſt. What a multitude of ſubjects are there in the world, who never ſaw their Prince, nor were at the making of any Law; if all theſe would deny their obedience, becauſe they have it only by hear-ſay, there is ſuch a man, and ſuch Laws, what would become of government? So alſo for property, if nothing of teſtimony may be admitted, how ſhall any man prove his right to any thing? All pleas muſt be decided by the Sword, and we ſhall fall into that ſtate (which ſome have fancied the primitive) of univerſal hoſtility. In like manner for traffick and commerce; how ſhould any Merchant firſt attempt a trade to any foreign part of the world, if he did not believe that ſuch a place there was? and how could he believe that, but upon the credit of thoſe who have been there? Nay, indeed how could any man firſt attempt to go but to the next Market Town, if he did not from the report of others conclude that ſuch a one there was? So that if this univerſal diffidence ſhould prevail, every man ſhould be a kind of *Plantagnus*, fixt to the ſoil he firſt ſprung up in. The abſurdities are indeed ſo infinite, and ſo obvious, that I need not dilate upon them

'Tis not of moment that the promulgation of laws, and relations of trade, are made by our contemporaries.

47. But it will perhaps be ſaid, that in things that are told us by our contemporaries, and that relate to our own time, men will be leſs apt to deceive us, becauſe they know 'tis in our power to examine and diſcover the truth. To this I might ſay, that in many inſtances it would ſcarce quit coſt to do ſo and the inconveniencies of trial would exceed thoſe of belief. But I ſhall willingly admit this probable Argument, and only deſire it may be applied to our main queſtion, by conſidering whether the Primitive Chriſtians, who received the Scripture as Divine, had not the ſame ſecurity of not being Deceiv'd, who had as great opportunities of examining, and the greateſt concern of doing it throughly, ſince they were to engage not only their future hopes in another world, but (that which to nature is more ſenſible) all their preſent enjoyments and even life it ſelf upon the truth of it.

48. But becauſe it muſt be confeſt that we who are ſo many Ages remov'd from them, have not their means of aſſurance, let us in the next place conſider whether an aſſent to thoſe teſtimonies they have left behind them, be not warranted by the common practice of mankind in other caſes. Who is there that queſtions there was ſuch a man as ***William*** the Conqueror in this Iſland? or, to lay the Scene farther, who doubts there was an *Alexander*, a ***Julius*** *Cæſar*, an *Auguſtus*? Now what have we to found this confidence on beſides the faith of Hiſtory? And I preſume even thoſe who expect the ſevereſt demonſtrations for Eccleſiaſtic Story, would think him a very impertinent Sceptic that ſhould do the like in theſe. So alſo as to the Authors of Books; who diſputes whether *Homer* writ the Iliads, or ***Virgil*** the Æneids, or *Cæſar* the Commentaries, that paſs under their names? yet none of theſe have been atteſted in any degree like the Scripture. 'Tis ſaid indeed, that *Cæſar* ventur'd his own life to ſave his Commentaries, imploying one hand to hold thoſe above the water, when it ſhould have aſſiſted him in ſwimming. But who ever laid down their lives in atteſtation of that, or any human compoſure, as multitudes of men have done for the Bible?

We allow the ancient hiſtorical accounts of men, actions, and books.

49. But perhaps 'twill be ſaid, that the ſmall concern men have, who wrote theſe, or other the like Books, inclines them to acquieſce in the common opinion. To this I muſt ſay, that many things inconſiderable to mankind have been oft very laborioufly diſcuſt, as appears by many unedifying Volumes, both of Philoſophers and Schoolmen. But whatever may be ſaid in this inſtance, 'tis manifeſt there are others, wherein mens real and greateſt intereſt are intruſted to the teſtimonies of former Ages. For example, a man poſſeſſes an eſtate, which was bought by his great Grand father, or perhaps elder progenitor: he charily preſerves that deed of purchaſe, and never looks for farther ſecurity of his title: yet alas, at the rate that men object againſt the Bible, what numberleſs Cavils might be rais'd againſt ſuch a deed? How ſhall it be known that there was ſuch a man as either Seller or Purchaſer; If by the Witneſſes, they are as liable to doubt as the other; it being as eaſie to forge the Atteſtation as the main writing: and yet notwithſtanding all theſe poſſible deceits, nothing but a poſitive proof of forgery can invalidate this deed. Let but the Scripture have the ſame meaſure, be allowed to ſtand in force, to be what it pretends to be, till the contrary be (not by ſurmiſes and poſſible conjectures) but by evident proof evinc'd; and its greateſt Advocates will ask no more.

Nor is it of moment to ſay, that in theſe inſtances we give our aſſent, becauſe the things are of ſmall concern.

50. A like inſtance may be given in publick concerns: the immunities and rights of any Nation, particularly here of our *Magna Charta*, granted many Ages ſince, and depoſited among the publick Records: to make this ſignify any thing, it muſt be taken for granted, that this was without falſification preſerv'd to our times; yet how eaſie were it to ſuggeſt that in ſo long a ſucceſſion of its keepers, ſome may have been prevail'd on by the influence of Princes to abridge and curtail its conceſſions; others by a prevailing faction of the people to amplifie and extend it? Nay, if men were as great Scepticks in the Law, as they are in Divinity, they might exact demonſtrations that the whole thing were not a forgery. Yet for all theſe poſſible ſurmiſes, we ſtill build upon it, and ſhould think he argued very fallaciouſly, that ſhould go to evacuate it, upon the force of ſuch remote ſuppoſitions.

Our immunities, and thoſe of Magna Charta are not of ſlight moment, and are allow'd to be free from falſification.

The ſecurity we have of the Scripture, is greater than we can have for our national records.

51. Now I deſire it may be conſider'd whether our Security concerning the Holy Scripture be not as great, nay, greater than it can be of this. For firſt, this is a concern only of a particular Nation, and ſo can expect no Foreign atteſtation; and ſecondly, it has all along reſted on the fidelity of its keepers; which has been either a ſingle perſon, or at beſt ſome ſmall number at a time; whereas the Scriptures have been witneſs'd to by perſons of all Nations, and thoſe not ſingle, but collective Bodies and Societies, even as many as there have been Chriſtian Churches throughout the world. And the ſame that are its Atteſtors, have been its Guardians alſo, and by their multitudes made it a very difficult, if not an impoſſible thing, to falſifie it in any conſiderable degree; it being not imaginable, as I ſhew'd before from S. *Auſtin*, all Churches ſhould combine to do it: and if they did not, the fraud could not paſs undetected: and if no eminent change could happen, much leſs could any new, any counterfeit Goſpel be obtruded, after innumerable Copies of the firſt had been tranſlated into almoſt all Languages, and diſpers'd through the World.

Or the imperial law.

52. The Imperial Law compil'd by *Juſtinian*, was ſoon after his death, by reaſon of the inroads of the *Goths* and other barbarous Nations, utterly loſt in the Weſtern world, and ſcarce once heard of for the ſpace of five hundred years, and then came caſually to be retriev'd upon the taking of *Amalſis* by the *Piſans*, one ſingle Copy being found there at the plundering of the City. And the whole credit of thoſe Pandects, which have ever ſince govern'd the Weſtern world, depends in a manner on that ſingle Book, formerly call'd the *Piſan*; and now, after that *Piſa* was taken by the *Florentines*, the *Florentine* Copy. But notwithſtanding this, the body of the Civil Law obtains; and no man thinks it reaſonable to queſtion its being really what it pretends to be, notwithſtanding its ſingle and ſo long interrupted derivation. I might draw this parallel through many other inſtances, but theſe may ſuffice to ſhew, that if the Scripture might find but ſo much equity, as to be try'd by the common meaſures of other things, it would very well paſs the teſt.

Men, when they are reſolv'd to diſobey the precepts of Scripture, think it their concern to diſavow its autority.

53. But men ſeem in this caſe (like our late Legiſlators) to ſet up new extraregular Courts of Juſtice, to try thoſe whom no ordinary rules will caſt, yet their deſigns require ſhould be condemn'd: and we may conclude, 'tis not the force of Reaſon, but of prejudice that makes them ſo unequal to themſelves, as to reject the Scripture, when they receive every thing elſe upon far weaker grounds. The bottom of it is, they are reſolv'd not to obey its precepts; and therefore think it the ſhorteſt cut to diſavow its authority: for ſhould they once own that they would find themſelves intangl'd in the moſt inextricable dilemma; that of the *Phariſees* about *John Baptiſt*, *If we ſay from heaven, he will ſay, Why then did you not believe him?* Matt. 21. 25. If they confeſs the Scriptures Divine, they muſt be ſelf-condemn'd in not obeying them. And truly men that have ſuch preingagements to their luſts, that they muſt admit nothing that will diſturb them, do but prevaricate, when they call for greater evidence and demonſtrations: for thoſe boſom Sophiſters will elude the moſt manifeſt conviction, and like Juglers, make men disbelieve even their own ſenſes. So that any other ways of evidence will be as diſputable with them, as thoſe already offer'd: which is the third thing propos'd to conſider.

No poſſible way of revelation would gain better credit, than thoſe afforded already.

54. It has been ſometimes ſeen in popular mutinies, that when blanks have been ſent them, they could not agree what to aſk: and were it imaginable that God ſhould ſo far court the infidelity of men, as to allow them to make their own demands, to ſet down what ways of proof would

perſwade them; I doubt not there are many have obſtinacy enough to defeat their own methods, as well as they do now God's. 'Tis ſure here is no ordinary way of conviction left for them to ask, God having already (as has alſo been ſhew'd) afforded that. They muſt therefore reſort to immediate revelation, expect inſtant aſſurances from Heaven, that this Book we call the Bible, is the word of God.

Not dreams.

55. My firſt queſtion then is, in what manner this revelation muſt be made to appear credible to them. The beſt account we have of the ſeveral ways of revelation, is from the *Jews*, to whom God was pleas'd upon new emergencies ſignally to reveal himſelf. Theſe were firſt Dreams; ſecondly Viſions; by both which the Prophets receiv'd their inſpirations. Thirdly, *Urim* and *Thummim.* Fourthly, the *Bath-col* (as they term it) Thunder and Voice from Heaven. Let us conſider them diſtinctly, and ſee whether our Sceptical men may not probably find ſomewhat to diſpute in every one of theſe. And firſt for dreams, it is among us ſo hard to diſtinguiſh between thoſe that ariſe from conſtitution, prepoſſeſſion of fancy, Diabolical or Divine infuſion, that thoſe that have the moſt critically conſider'd them, do rather difference them by their matter, than any certain diſcriminating circumſtances: and unleſs we had ſome infallible way of diſcerning, our dependance on them may more probably betray than direct us. 'Tis unqueſtionable that uſually fancy has the greateſt ſtroke in them. And if he that ſhould commit himſelf to the guidance of his waking fancy, is not like to be over-wiſely govern'd, what can we expect from his ſleeping? All this and more, may doubtleſs be ſoberly enough objected againſt the validity of our common Dreams.

Tho clearly ſupernatural

56. But admit there were now ſuch Divine Dreams as brought their evidence along with them, yet ſure 'tis poſſible for prejudic'd men to reſiſt even the cleareſt convictions. For do we not ſee ſome that have made a ſhift to extinguiſh that natural light, thoſe notions which are interwoven into the very frame and conſtitution of their minds, that ſo they may ſin more at eaſe, and without reluctancy? and ſure 'tis as poſſible for them to cloſe their eyes againſt all rays from without too, to reſiſt revelation as well as inſtinct; and more likely, by how much a tranſient cauſe is naturally leſs operative than a permanent. An inſtance of this we have in *Balaam*, who being in theſe nightly viſitations, prohibited by God to go to *Balak*, and tho he knew then what he afterwards ſays, *Num.* 23. 19. that *God was not a man that he ſhould lie, nor the ſon of man, that he ſhould repent*; yet he would not take God at his firſt word, but upon a freſh bait to his covetouſneſs, tries again for an anſwer more indulgent to his intereſt. Beſides, if God ſhould thus reveal himſelf to ſome particular perſons, yet 'tis beyond all precedent or imagination, that he ſhould do it to every man; and then how ſhall thoſe who have theſe Dreams, be able to convince others that they are Divine.

They would be ſo far from obtaining belief, that probably they would be matter of ſport.

57. 'Tis eaſie to gueſs what reception a man that produces no other authority, would have in this ludicrous Age: he would certainly be thought rather to want ſleep, than to have had revelations in it. And if *Jacob* and the Patriarchs, who were themſelves acquainted with divine Dreams, yet did not believe *Joſeph's*; any man that ſhould now pretend in that kind, would be ſure to fall under the ſame irony that he did, to be entertain'd with a *behold this Dreamer cometh*, Gen. 37. 19.

Not Viſions or Extaſies.

58. The ſecond way of revelation by viſion was, where the man was wrapt in an extaſie, his ſpirit for a while ſuſpended from all ſenſible communication with the body, and entertain'd with ſupernatural light. In

theſe the Prophets ſaw emblematical repreſentations of future events, receiv'd knowledge of divine Myſteries, and commiſſion and ability to diſcharge the whole Prophetic office. Now ſuppoſe God ſhould now raiſe us Prophets, and inſpire them after this manner; what would the merry men of this time ſay to it? Can we think that they who rally upon all that the former Prophets have writ, would look with much reverence on what the new ones ſhould ſay? Some perhaps would conſtrue their raptures to be but like *Mahomet*'s Epilepſy; others a fit of frenzy, others perhaps a being *Drunk with new wine*, Acts 2. 13. but thoſe that did the moſt ſoberly conſider it, would ſtill need a new revelation to atteſt the truth of this: there being far more convincing arguments to prove the Scriptures Divine, than any man can alledge to prove his inſpiration to be ſo. And 'tis ſure a very irrational method to attempt the clearing of a doubt by ſomewhat which is it ſelf more doubtful.

Not Oracles.

59. A third way was by *Urim* and *Thummim*, which Writers tell us was an Oracle reſulting from the Letters which were engraven in the High Prieſt's Pectoral, to which in all important doubts the *Jews* of thoſe Ages reſorted, and receiv'd reſponſes; but whether it were by the ſuddain prominency, or reſplendency of the letters, or by any other way, is not material in this place to enquire: one thing is certain, that the Ephod, and conſequently the Pectoral, was in the Prieſt's Cuſtody, and that he had the adminiſtration of the whole affair. Now I refer it to conſideration, whether this one circumſtance would not (to thoſe prejudic'd men I ſpeak of) utterly evacuate the credit of the Oracle. They have taught themſelves to look on Prieſthood, whether Legal or Evangelical, only as a better name for impoſture and cozenage: and they that can accuſe the Prieſts for having kept up a cheat for ſo many Ages, muſt needs think them ſuch omnipotent Juglers, that nothing can be fence againſt their Legerdemain: and by conſequence, this way of revelation would rather foment their diſpleaſure at the Eccleſiaſticks, than ſatisfie their doubts of the Scripture.

Not a voice from heaven.

60. Laſtly, for the fourth way, that of Thunder and Voice from heaven, tho that would be a ſignal way of conviction to unprejudiced men, yet it would probably have as little effect as the reſt upon others: men that pretend to ſuch deep reaſonings, would think it childiſh to be frighted out of their opinion by a clap of Thunder; ſome Philoſophical reaſon ſhall be found out, to ſatisfy them that 'tis the effect only of ſome natural cauſe, and any the moſt improbable ſhall ſerve turn to ſupplant the fear of its being a Divine teſtimony to that which they are ſo unwilling ſhould be true. As for the voice from Heaven, it muſt either be heard by others, and related to them; or elſe immediately by themſelves: if the former, 'twill lie under the ſame prejudice which the Bible already does, that they have it but by hear-ſay: and reporters would fall under the reproach either of deſign or frenzy; that they meant to deceive, or were themſelves deceiv'd by their own diſtemper'd fancy. But if themſelves ſhould be Auditors of it, 'tis odds but their bottomleſs jealouſies in divine matters would ſuggeſt a poſſibility of fraud, tho they knew not how to trace it: nay 'tis more than poſſible that they will rather disbelieve their own ſenſes, than in this inſtance take their teſtimony with all its conſequences.

Prejudice prevails with men to disbelieve their ſenſes.

61. Nor is this a wild ſuppoſition: for we ſee it poſſible for not only ſingle men, but multitudes to disbelieve their ſenſes thro' an exceſs of credulity: witneſs the doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation. Why may it not then be as poſſible for others to do the like thro' a greater exceſs of incredulity? Beſides mens prepoſſeſſions and affections have a ſtrange influence

on their Faith: men many times will not ſuffer themſelves to believe the moſt credible things, if they croſs their inclination. How often do we ſee irregular patients that will not believe any thing that their appetite craves will do them hurt, though their Phyſicians, nay their own even ſenſitive experience atteſt it to them? And can we think that a diſeas'd mind, gaſping with an Hydropic thirſt after the pleaſures of ſin will ever aſſent to thoſe premiſes, whoſe concluſion will engage to the renouncing them? Will not a luxurious voluptuous perſon be willing rather to give his ears the lye, to diſbelieve what he hears, than permit them more deeply to diſoblige his other ſenſes, by bringing in thoſe reſtraints and mortifications which the Scripture would impoſe upon them?

Not one riſing from the dead.

62. Thus we ſee how little probability there is, that any of theſe ways of revelation would convince theſe incredulous men. And indeed thoſe that will not believe upon ſuch inducements as may ſatisfy men of ſober reaſon, will hardly ſubmit to any other method, according to that Aſſertion of Father *Abraham, If they hear not Moſes and the Prophets, neither will they be perſwaded, though one roſe from the dead,* Luke 16 31. Now at this rate of infidelity, what way will they leave God to manifeſt any thing convincingly to the world? which is to put him under an impotency greater than adheres to humanity: for we men have power to communicate our minds to others, tell whether we own ſuch or ſuch a thing to which we are intitled; and we can ſatisfie our Auditors that it is indeed we that ſpeak to them; but if every method God uſes, does rather increaſe than ſatisfie mens doubts, all intercourſe between God and man is intercepted; and he muſt do that of neceſſity, which *Epicurus* fanſied he did of his choice, *viz.* keep himſelf unconcern'd in the affairs of mortals, as having no way of communicating with them. Nay (what is yet, if poſſible, more abſurd) he muſt be ſuppos'd to have put the works of his Creation out of his own reach, to have given men diſcourſive faculties, and left himſelf no way of addreſs to them.

The Sceptics reaſonings import that God not only has not, but cannot reveal his will to men: and has left him in a worſe ſtate than brute beaſts, who have inſtinct to guide them.

63. Theſe inferences how horridly ſoever they ſound, yet I ſee not how they can be diſclaim'd by thoſe who are unſatisfied with all thoſe ways by which God hath hitherto reveal'd himſelf to the world. For can it be imagin'd, that God who created man a reaſonable creature, that himſelf might be glorified in his free and rational obedience; (when all other creatures obey upon impulſe and inſtinct) can it, I ſay, be imagin'd, that he ſhould ſo remiſly purſue his own deſign, as to let ſo many Ages paſs ſince the Creation, and never to acquaint mankind with the particulars wherein that obedience was to be exercis'd. This ſure were ſo diſagreeable to his wiſdom and goodneſs, that it cannot be charg'd upon his will: and conſequently they who own not that he had made any ſuch revelation, muſt tacitly tax him of impotence, that he could not do it. But if any man ſay he has, and yet reject all this which both Jews and Chriſtians receive as ſuch, let him produce his teſtimonies for the others, or rather (to retort his own meaſure) his demonſtrations. And then let it appear whether his Scheme of Doctrine, or ours, will need the greater aid of that eaſie credulity he reproaches us with.

Exceptions taken againſt the ſtile of holy Scripture.

64. I have now gone through the method I propoſed for evincing the Divine Original of the Scriptures, and ſhall not deſcend to examine thoſe more minute and particular Cavils which prophane men make againſt them; the proof of this virtually ſuperſeding all thoſe. For if it be reaſonable to believe it the Word of God, it muſt be reaſonable alſo to believe it of perfection proportionable to the Author; and then certainly

it muſt be advanc'd beyond all our objection. For to thoſe who except to the ſtile, the incoherence, the contradictions, or whatever elſe in Scripture; I ſhall only ask this one queſtion, whether it be not much more poſſible, that they (who can pretend to be nothing above fallible men) may misjudge, than that the infallible God ſhould dictate any thing juſtly liable to thoſe charges: I am ſure they muſt depart as much from Reaſon as Religion, to affirm the contrary. But alas, inſtead of this implicit ſubmiſſion to God's Word, men take up explicit prejudices againſt it; condemn it without ever examining the truth of the allegation. 'Tis certain that in a Writing of ſuch Antiquity, whoſe original Language has Idioms and Phraſes ſo peculiar, whoſe Country had cuſtoms ſo differing from the reſt of the world; 'tis impoſſible to judge of it without reference to all thoſe circumſtances. Add to this, that the Hebrew has been a dead Language for well nigh two thouſand years, no where in common uſe: nor is there any other ancient Book now extant in it, beſides thoſe (yet not all neither) of the Old Teſtament.

Concerning which the cenſurers are generally moſt incompetent.

65. Now of thoſe many who defame Holy Writ, how few are there that have the induſtry to inquire into thoſe particulars? and when for want of knowledge, ſome paſſages ſeem improper, or perhaps contradictory; the Scripture muſt bear the blame of their ignorance, and be accus'd as abſurd and unintelligible, becauſe themſelves are ſtupid and negligent. It were therefore methinks but a reaſonable propoſal, that no man ſhould arraign it, till they have uſed all honeſt diligence, taken in all probable helps for the underſtanding it: and if this might be obtain'd, I believe moſt of its Accuſers would like thoſe of the woman in the Goſpel *John*, 8. 9. drop away, as conſcious of their own incompetency; the loudeſt out-cries that are made againſt it, being commonly of thoſe who fall upon it only as a faſhionable theme of diſcourſe, and hope to acquire themſelves the reputation of wits by thus charging God fooliſhly. But he that would candidly and uprightly endeavour to comprehend before he judges, and to that end induſtriouſly uſe thoſe means which the Providence of God by the labours of pious men hath afforded him, will certainly find cauſe to acquit the Scripture of thoſe imputations which our bold Critics have caſt upon it. I do not ſay that he ſhall have all the obſcuritiſe of it perfectly clear'd to him; but he ſhall have ſo many of them as is for his real advantage, and ſhall diſcern ſuch reaſons why the reſt remain unfathomable, as may make him not only juſtify, but celebrate the wiſdom of the Author.

But no writing can eſcape cavil and prejudice: and 'tis a judgment that they ſhould not underſtand who ſhut their eyes.

66. Yet this is to be expected only upon the foremention'd condition, *viz.* that he comes with ſincere and honeſt intentions; for as for him that comes to the Scripture with deſign, and wiſhes to find matter of cavil and accuſations; there is little doubt but that ſpirit of impiety and profaneneſs which ſent him thither, will meet him there as a ſpirit of deluſion, and occœcation. That Prince of the Air will caſt ſuch miſts, raiſe ſuch black vapours, that as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *The light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt ſhall not ſhine unto him,* 2 Cor. 4. 4. Indeed were ſuch a man left only to the natural efficacy of prejudice, that is of it ſelf ſo blinding, ſo infatuating a thing, as commonly fortifies againſt all conviction. We ſee it in all the common inſtances of life: mens very ſenſes are often enſlav'd by it: the prepoſſeſſion of a ſtrong fancy, will make the objects of ſight or hearing appear quite different from what they are. But in the preſent caſe, when this ſhall be added to Satanical illuſions, and both left to their operations by God's withdrawing his illuminating Grace, the caſe of ſuch a man anſwers the deſcription of Scripture, *They have eyes and ſee not, ears have*

they and hear not, Rom. 11. 8. And that God will ſo withdraw his grace, we have all reaſon to believe; he having promis'd it only to the meek, to thoſe who come with malleable ductile Spirits, to learn, and not to deride or cavil. S. *Peter* tells us, that the *unlearned and unſtable, wreſt the Scripture to their own deſtruction*, 2 *Pet*. 3. 15. And if God permit ſuch to do ſo, much more will he the proud and malicious.

He that do's the will of God, ſhall know of the doctrine.

67. I ſay not this to deter any from the ſtudy of Holy Scripture, but only to caution them to bring a due preparation of mind along with them; God's Word being like a generous ſoveraign medicament, which if ſimply and regularly taken, is of the greateſt benefit; but if mixt with poiſon, ſerves only to make that more fatally operative. To conclude, he that would have his doubts ſolv'd concerning Scripture, let him follow the method our bleſſed Lord has preſcrib'd: Let him *do the will of God, and then he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God*, John 7. 17. Let him bring with him a probity of mind, a willingneſs to aſſent to all convictions he ſhall there meet with; and then he will find grounds ſufficient to aſſure him that it is God's Word, and conſequently to be receiv'd with all the ſubmiſſion and reverence, that its being ſo exacts.

SECT. III.

The Subject matter treated of in the Holy Scripture, is excellent; as is alſo its end and deſign.

The ſubject matter of Scripture conſidered.

1. WE have hitherto conſider'd the holy Scripture only under one notion, as it is the Word of God; we come now to view it in the ſubject matter of it, the ſeveral parts whereof it conſiſts; which are ſo various and comprehenſive, as ſhews the whole is deriv'd from *him who is all in all*, 1 Cor. 19. 28. But that we may not ſpeak only looſely, and at rovers, we will take this excellent Frame in pieces, and conſider its moſt eminent parts diſtinctly. Now the parts of Holy Writ ſeem to branch themſelves into theſe ſeverals: Firſt, the Hiſtorical; Secondly, the Prophetick; Thirdly, the Doctrinal; Fourthly, the Preceptive; Fifthly, the Minatory; Sixthly, the Promiſſory. Theſe are the ſeveral veins in this rich Mine, in which he who induſtriouſly labours, will find the Pſalmiſt was not out in his eſtimate, when he pronounces them *more to be deſir'd than gold, yea, than fine gold*, Pſal. 19. 10.

Firſt the Hiſtorical part.

2. To ſpeak firſt of the Hiſtorical part, the things which chiefly recommend a Hiſtory, are the dignity of the ſubject, the truth of the relation and thoſe pleaſant and profitable obſervations which are interwoven with it. And firſt for the dignity of the ſubject, the Hiſtory of the Bible muſt be acknowledg'd to excel all others: thoſe ſhew the riſe and progreſs of ſome one People or Empire; this ſhews us the original of the whole Univerſe; and particularly of man, for whoſe uſe and benefit, the whole Creation was deſign'd. By this mankind is brought into acquaintance with it ſelf; made to know the elements of its conſtitution, and taught to put a differing value upon that Spirit which was *breath'd into it by God*, Gen. 2. 7. and the fleſh, whoſe *foundation is in the duſt*, Job 4. 19. And when this Hiſtorical part of Scripture contracts and draws into a narrow channel, when it records the concerns but of one Nation, yet it was that which God had dignified above all the reſt of the world, mark'd it out for his own

peculiar; made it the repoſitory of his truth, and the viſible ſtock from whence the Meſſias ſhould come, in whom *all the Nations of the earth were to be bleſſed*, Gen. 18. 18. ſo that in this one people of the Jews, was virtually infolded the higheſt and moſt important intereſts of the whole world; and it muſt be acknowledg'd, no ſtory could have a nobler ſubject to treat of.

The relations are remarkably impartial, the Hiſtorians recording their own faults.

3. Secondly, as to the truth of the relation, tho to thoſe who own it God's Word, there needs no other proof; yet it wants not human Arguments to confirm it. The moſt undoubted ſymptom of ſincerity in an Hiſtorian is impartiality. Now this is very eminent in Scripture writers: they do not record others faults, and baulk their own, but indifferently accuſe themſelves as well as others. *Moſes* mentions his own diffidence and unwillingneſs to go on God's meſſage, *Exod.* 4. 13. his provocation of God at the waters of *Meribah*, Num. 20. *Jonah* records his own ſullen behaviour towards God, with as great aggravations as any of his enemies could have done. *Peter* in his dictating S. *Mark*'s Goſpel, neither omits nor extenuates his ſin; all he ſeems to ſpeak ſhort in, is his repentance. S. *Paul* regiſters himſelf as the greateſt of ſinners.

And their neareſt relations.

4. And as they were not indulgent to their own perſonal faults, ſo neither did any nearneſs of relation, any reſpect of quality, bribe them to a concealment: *Moſes* relates the offence of his Siſter *Miriam* in mutining. *Num.* 12. 1. of his brother *Aaron* in the matter of the Calf, *Exod.* 32. 4. with as little diſguiſe as that of *Korah* and his company. *David*, tho a King, hath his adultery and murder diſplay'd in the blackeſt characters: and King *Hezekiah*'s little vanity of ſhewing his treaſures, do's not eſcape a remark. Nay, even the reputation of their Nation could not biaſs the ſacred Writers; but they freely tax their crimes: the Iſraelites murmurings in the wilderneſs, their Idolatries in *Canaan*, are ſet down without any palliation or excuſe. And they are as frequently branded for their ſtubbornneſs and ingratitude, as the Canaanites are for their abominations. So that certainly no Hiſtory in the world does better atteſt its truth by this evidence of impartiality.

The narrations are rare and ſurprizing.

5. In the laſt place it commends it ſelf both by the pleaſure and profit it yields. The rarity of thoſe events it records, ſurprizes the mind with a delightful admiration; and that mixture of ſage Diſcourſes, and well-coucht Parables wherewith it abounds, does at once pleaſe and inſtruct. How ingeniouſly apt was *Nathan*'s Apologue to *David*, whereby with holy artifice he enſnar'd him into repentance? And it remains ſtill matter of inſtruction to us, to ſhew us with what unequal ſcales we are apt to weigh the ſame crime in others and our ſelves. So alſo that long train of ſmart calamities which ſucceeded his ſin, is ſet out with ſuch particularity, that it ſeems to be exactly the crime revers'd. His own luſt with *Bathſheba*, was anſwer'd with *Amnon*'s towards *Thamar*; his murder of *Uriah* with that of *Amnon*, his treacherous contrivance of that murder, with *Abſolom*'s traiterous conſpiracy againſt him. So that every circumſtance of his puniſhment, was the very echo and reverberation of his guilt. A multitude of the like inſtances might be produc'd out of holy Writ; all concurring to admoniſh us, that God exactly marks, and will repay our crimes; and that commonly with ſuch propriety, that we need no other clue to guide us to the cauſe of our ſufferings, than the very ſufferings themſelves. Indeed innumerable are the profitable obſervations ariſing from the hiſtorical part of Scripture, that flow ſo eaſily and unconſtrain'd, that nothing but a ſtupid inadvertence in the Reader can make him baulk them: therefore 'twould be impertinent here to multiply inſtances.

Secondly, the prophetick part.

6. Let us next conſider the prophetick part of Scripture, and we ſhall find it no leſs excellent in its kind. The prophetick Books are for the moſt part made up (as the Prophetick office was) of two parts; Prediction and Inſtruction. When God rais'd up Prophets, 'twas not only to acquaint men with future events, but to reform their preſent manners: therefore as they are called Seers in one reſpect, ſo they are Watchmen and Shepherds in another. Nay, indeed the former was often ſubſervient to the other as to the nobler end; their gift of foretelling was to gain them authority, to be as it were the ſeal of their commiſſion; to convince men that they were ſent from God: and ſo to render them the more pliant to their reproofs and admonitions. And the very matter of their propheſies was uſually adapted to this end: the denouncing of Judgments being the moſt frequent Theme, and that deſign'd to bring men to repentance; as appears experimentally in the caſe of *Nineveh*. And this latter part of their office, the Prophets acted with the greateſt incitation and vehemence.

The liberty and freedom of rebukes.

7. With that liberty and zeal does *Elijah* arrain *Ahab* of *Naboth*'s murder, and fore-tell the fatal event it, without any fear of his power, or reverence of his greatneſs? And *Samuel*, when he delivers *Saul* the fatal meſſage of his rejection, does paſſionately and convincingly expoſtulate with him concerning his ſin, 1 *Sam.* 15. 17. Now the very ſame Spirit ſtill breaths in all the prophetick Writings: the ſame truth of prediction, and the ſame zeal againſt vice.

The truth of predictions.

8. Firſt for the Predictions, what ſignal completions do we find? How exactly are all the denunciations of judgments fulfill'd, where repentance has not interven'd? He that reads the 28th chap. of *Deut.* and compares it with the Jews calamities, both under the Aſſyrians and Babylonians, and eſpecially under the Romans, would think their oppreſſors had conſulted it, and tranſcrib'd their ſeverities thence. And even theſe Nations, who were the inſtruments of accompliſhing thoſe diſmal preſages, had their own ruins fore-told, and as punctually executed. And as in Kingdoms and Nations, ſo to private Perſons, none of the Prophetick threatnings ever return'd empty. The ſentence pronounc'd againſt *Ahab*, *Jezebel*, and their poſterity, was fulfill'd even to the moſt minute circumſtances of place and manner, as is evident by comparing the denunciation of *Elijah*, 1 *Kings*, 21. 19. 23. with their tragical ends recorded in the following Chapters. And as for *Jehu*, whoſe ſervice God was pleas'd to uſe in that execution, tho he rewarded it with entailing the Crown of *Iſrael* on him for four deſcents; yet he foretold thoſe ſhould be the limits, and accordingly we find *Zachariah*, the fourth deſcendant of his line, was the laſt of it that ſat on that Throne, 2 *Kings*, 15. 10. So alſo the deſtruction of *Achitophel* and *Judas*, the one immediate, the other many hundred years remote, are foretold by *David*, Pſal. 109. and we find exactly anſwered in the event.

Eſpecially the promiſo-ry.

9. Nor was this exactneſs confin'd only to the ſevere predictions, but as eminent in the more gracious. All the bleſſings which God by himſelf, or the Miniſtry of the Prophets promis'd, were ſtill infallibly made good. At the time of life God return'd and viſited *Sarah* with conception, notwithſtanding thoſe natural improbabilities which made her not only diſtruſt, but even deride and laugh at the promiſe, *Gen.* 18. The poſterity of that Son of Promiſe, the whole race of *Abraham* was delivered from the Egyptian bondage, and poſſeſs'd of *Canaan*, at the preciſe time which God had long before ſignified to *Abraham*, Gen. 15. So likewiſe the return of

the Jews from the Babyloniſh captivity, was foretold many years before their deportation, and *Cyrus* named for their reſtorer, before he had either name or being, ſave only in God's preſcience, *Iſa.* 44. 28. But I need not multiply inſtances of national and perſonal promiſes. The earlieſt and comprehenſive promiſe of all was that of the Meſſiah, in whom all perſons and *Nations of the World were to be bleſt*, Gen. 22. 11. *that ſeed of the Woman that ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's head*, Gen. 3. 15. *To him give all the Prophets witneſs*, as S. *Peter* obſerves, *Acts* 10. And he who was the ſubject, made himſelf alſo the expounder of thoſe Prophecies in his walk to *Emmaus* with the two Diſciples, *Luke* 24. 27. *beginning at* Moſes *and all the Prophets, he expounded to them all the Scriptures, the things concerning himſelf.*

And above all the promiſe of the Meſſiah.

10. This as it was infinitely the greateſt bleſſing afforded mankind, ſo was it the moſt frequently and eminently predicted; and that with the moſt exact particularity as to all circumſtances. His immaculate conception, the union of his two natures implied in his name *Immanuel*; *Behold a virgin ſhall conceive and bear a Son, and ſhall call his name Immanuel*; is moſt plainly foretold by *Iſa.* chap. 7. 14. Nay, the very place of his birth ſo punctually foretold, that the Prieſts and Scribes could readily reſolve *Herod*'s queſtion upon the ſtrength of the Prophecy, and aſſure him Chriſt muſt be *born in Bethlehem*, Matt. 2. 5. As for the whole buſineſs and deſign of his life, we find it ſo deſcrib'd by *Iſaiah*, chap. 61. as Chriſt himſelf owns it, *Luke* 4. 18. *The ſpirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath appointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath ſent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovering of ſight to the blind, to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

And propitiation by his death.

11. If we look farther to his death, the greateſt part of the Old Teſtament hath a direct aſpect on it. All the Levitical œconomy of Sacrifices and Ablutions were but Prophetick Rites, aud ocular Predictions of that one expiatory Oblation. Nay, moſt of God's providential diſpenſations to the Jews, carried in them types and prefigurations of this. Their reſcue from *Egypt*, the ſprinkling blood to ſecure them from the deſtroying Angel; the Manna with which they were fed; the Rock which ſupplied them with water: theſe and many more referr'd to Chriſt, as their final and higheſt ſignification.

Prefigured in ſacrifices, and foretold by all the Prophets.

12. But beſides theſe darker adumbrations, we have (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *a more ſure word of prophecy.* S. *Peter* in his calculation begins with *Moſes*, takes in *Samuel*, and the whole ſucceſſion of Prophets after him, as bearing witneſs to this great event of Chriſt's Paſſion, *Acts* 4. 22, 24. And indeed he that reads the Prophets conſideringly ſhall find it ſo punctually deſcrib'd, that the Evangeliſts do not much more fully inſtruct him in the circumſtances of it. *Daniel* tells us his death, as to the kind of it, was to be violent: *The Meſſiah ſhall be cut off*; and as to the deſign of it, 'twas *not for himſelf*, Dan. 9. 26. But the Prophet *Iſaiah* gives us more than a bare negative account of it; and expreſly ſays, *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions; he was bruiſed for our iniquities; the chaſtiſement of our peace was on him, and by his ſtripes we are healed*, chap. 53. 3. And again, ver. 10. *Thou ſhalt make his Soul an offering for ſin*; and ver. 11. *my righteous Servant ſhall juſtify many, for he ſhall bear their iniquities.* Nor is *Job*, an Idumean, much ſhort of even this Evangelical Prophet, in that ſhort Creed of his, wherein he owns him as his Redeemer, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, &c.* Job 19. 25.

The ſmalleſt circumſtances of the paſſion were not omitted.

13. And as the end, ſo the circumſtances of his ſufferings are moſt of them under prediction: his extention upon the Croſs is mention'd by the Pſalmiſt: *They pierced my hands and my feet, I may tell all my bones*, Pſal. 22. 16, 17. As for his inward dolors, they are in that Pſalm ſo pathetically deſcribed, , that Chriſt choſe that very form to breath them out in, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* v. 1. So his revilers did alſo tranſcribe part of their reproaches from ver. 9. *He truſted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him,* Matt. 27. 43. That vinegar which was offered him on the Croſs, was a completion of a prophecy; *In my thirſt they gave me vinegar to drink,* Pſal. 69. 21. The piercing of his ſide was expreſly foretold by *Zachary*; *They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced,* Zach. 10. 12. The company in which he ſuffered, and the entertainment he had, are alſo intimated by *Iſaiah, He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death,* Iſa. 53. 9. Nay even the diſpoſal of his garments was not without a prophecy; *They parted my garments among them, and upon my veſture did they caſt lots,* Pſal. 22. 18. Here are a cloud of witneſſes, which as they ſerve eminently to atteſt the truth of Chriſtian Religion; ſo do they to evince the excellency of Scripture, as to the verity of the Prophetic part.

The prophetick writings are moſt remarkable in their admonitory part.

14. As to the admonitory part of the prophetick Writings they are in their kind no way inferior to the other. The reproofs are authoritative and convincing. What piercing exprobrations do we find of *Iſrael*'s ingratitude? How often are they upbraided with the better example of the brute creatures? with the Ox and the Aſs by *Iſaiah*, ch. 1. 3. with the Stork, and the Crane, and the Swallow, by *Jeremiah*, ch. 8. 7. Nay the conſtancy of the Heathen to their falſe gods is inſtanc'd to reproach their revolt from the true. *Hath a Nation chang'd their gods which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit*, Jer. 2. 11. What awful, what majeſtick repreſentations do we find of God's power to awake their dread! *Fear ye not me, ſaith the Lord? will ye not tremble at my preſence; who have plac'd the Sands for the bounds of the ſea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot paſs over; and tho the waves thereof toſs themſelves, yet can they not prevail; tho they roar, yet can they not paſs over it*, Jer. 22. And again, *Thus ſaith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is holy: I dwell in the high and holy place*, Iſa. 57. 15. So we find him deſcrib'd as *a God glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes, doing wonders*, Exod. 15. 11. Theſe and many other the like flights of Divine eloquence we meet with in the Prophetick writings: which cannot but ſtrike us with an awful reverence of the Divine Power.

And the pathetick inducements to repentance.

15. Nor are they leſs pathetick in the gentler ſtrains. What inſtance is there of the greateſt tenderneſs and love, which God has not adopted to expreſs his by; he perſonates all the neareſt and moſt endearing relations: that of a Husband; *I will marry thee to my ſelf*, Hoſ. 2. 19. of a Father; *I am a father to Iſrael, and Ephraim is my firſt born:* nay, he vies bowels with the tender ſex, and makes it more poſſible for a mother to renounce her *compaſſion towards the ſon of her womb*, than for him to withdraw his, *Iſa.* 49. 15. By all theſe endearments, theſe *cords of a man, theſe bands of love*, as himſelf ſtiles them, *Hoſ.* 11. 14. endeavouring to draw his people to their duty and their happineſs. And when their perverſeneſs fruſtrates all this holy Artifice, how paſſionately does he expoſtulate with them? How ſolemnly proteſt his averſeneſs to their ruin? *Why will ye die O houſe of Iſrael? for I have no pleaſure in the death of him that dieth*, ſaith the Lord God, Ezek. 18. 31, 32. with what regrets and relenting does he think of abandoning them? *How ſhall I give thee up Ephraim? How ſhall I*

deliver thee Iſrael? How ſhall I make thee as Admah? How ſhall I ſet thee as Zeboim? My heart is turn'd within me, my repentings are kindled together, Hoſ. 11. 8. In ſhort, 'twere endleſs to cite the places in theſe Prophetick Books, wherein God do's thus condeſcend to ſollicit even the ſenſitive part of man; and that with ſuch moving Rhetorick, that I cannot but wonder at the exception ſome of our late Criticks make againſt the Bible, for its defect in that particular: for Oratory is nothing but a dextrous application to the affections and paſſions of men. And certainly we find not that done with greater advantage any where than in ſacred Writ.

Which yet is back'd with reaſon, and uncontroulable argument.

16 Yet it was not the deſign of the Prophets (no more than of the Apoſtle) to take men with guile, 2 *Cor.* 12. 16. to inveigle their affections unawares to their underſtandings: but they addreſs as well to their reaſons, make ſolemn appeals to their judicative faculties. And *Now judge, I pray, between me and my vineyard,* ſays *Iſa.* 5. 3. Nay, God by the Prophet *Ezekiel,* ſolemnly pleads his own cauſe before them, vindicates the equity of his proceedings from the aſperſions they had caſt on them; and by moſt irrefragable Arguments refutes that injurious Proverb which went current among them; and in the cloſe appeals to themſelves, *O houſe of Iſrael, are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal?* Ezek. 18. The evidences were ſo clear, that he remits the matter to their own determination. And generally we ſhall find among all the Topicks of diſſwaſion from ſin, there is none more cloſely preſt, than that of the folly of it. Idolatry was a ſin to which *Iſrael* had a great propenſion, and againſt which moſt of the Prophets admonitions were directed. And certainly it can never be more expos'd, ad the ſottiſh unreaſonableneſs of it better diſplay'd, than we find in the 44 chap. of *Iſaiah.* In like manner we may read the Prophet *Jeremy* diſſwading from the ſame ſin by Arguments of the moſt irrefragable conviction, *Jer.* 10.

Their concern was for ſolid vertue, and true piety.

17. And as the Prophets omitted nothing as to the manner of their addreſs, to render their exhortations effectual, the matter of them was likewiſe ſo conſiderable as to command attention; It was commonly either the recalling them from their Revolts and Apoſtacies from God by Idolatry, or elſe to convince them of the inſignificancy of all thoſe legal ceremonial performances they ſo much confided in, when taken up as a *ſuperſedeas* to moral duties. Upon this account it is, that they often depreciate, and in a manner prohibit the ſolemneſt of their worſhips. *To what purpoſe are the multitude of your ſacrifices unto me? bring no more vain oblations: incenſe is an abomination to me; the new moons and ſabbaths, the calling of aſſemblies I cannot away with: it is iniquity even your ſolemn meeting, &c.* Iſaiah 1. 11, 13. Not that theſe things were in themſelves reprovable, for they were all commanded by God; but becauſe the *Jews* depended ſo much on theſe external obſervances, that they thought by them to commute for the *weightier matters of the law* (as our Saviour after ſtiles them) *judgment, mercy and faith,* Matt. 23. 23. look'd on theſe rites which diſcriminated them from other Nations, as diſpenſations from the univerſal obligations of nature and common Juſtice.

Not ſatisfied with little formalities and outward ſervice.

18. This deceit of theirs is ſharply upbraided to them by the Prophet *Jeremy;* where he calls their boaſts of the *Temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, lying words,* and on the contrary, lays the whole ſtreſs of their obedience, and expectation of their happineſs on the juſtice and innocence of their converſation, chap. 7. 4. And after does ſmartly reproach their inſolence in boldly reſorting to that houſe, which by bringing their ſins

along with them, they made but an Aſylum and Sanctuary for thoſe crimes. *Will ye ſteal, murder, and commit adultery, and ſwear falſly, and burn incenſe to Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not, and come and ſtand before me in this houſe? Is this houſe, which is called by my name; become a den of robbers in your eyes?* Jer. 7. 9, 10, 11. Indeed all the Prophets ſeem to conſpire in this one deſign, of making them look thro' ſhadows and ceremonies, to that inward Purity, Juſtice and Honeſty, which they were deſign'd to inculcate, not to ſupplant. And this deſign as it is in it ſelf moſt excellent, moſt worthy the commandment of God and the nature of man; ſo we have ſeen that it has been purſued by all the moſt apt and moſt powerful mediums, that the thing or perſons addreſt to were capable of; and ſo that the Prophets are no leſs eminent for the diſcharge of this exhortatory part of their office, than they were in the former, of the predicting.

Thirdly, the Doctrinal part.

19. The next part of Scripture we are to conſider, is the Doctrinal; by which I ſhall not in this place underſtand the whole complex of Faith and manners together; but reſtrain it only to thoſe Revelations, which are the object of our Belief: and theſe are ſo ſublime, as ſhews fleſh and blood never reveal'd them. Thoſe great myſteries of our Faith, the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Hypoſtatical union, the Redemption of the World by making the offended party the ſacrifice for the offence; are things of ſo high and abſtruſe ſpeculation, as no finite underſtanding can fully fathom. I know their being ſo, is by ſome made an argument for disbelief; but doubtleſs, very unjuſtly: for (not to inſiſt upon the different natures of Faith and Science, by which that becomes a proper object of the one which is not of the other) our non-comprehenſion is rather an indication that they have a higher riſe; and renders it infinitely improbable that they could ſpring from men's invention. For 'twere to ſuppoſe too great a diſproportion between human faculties to think men could invent what themſelves could not underſtand. Indeed theſe things lie ſo much out of the road of human imagination, that I dare appeal to the Breaſts of the moſt perverſe gain-ſayers, whether ever they could have fallen into their thoughts without ſuggeſtion from without. And therefore 'tis a miraculous contradiction to reject theſe truths becauſe of their diſſonancy from human reaſon, and yet at the ſame time to aſcribe their original to man. But certainly there can be nothing more inconſiſtent with meer natural reaſon, than to think God can be or do no more than man can comprehend. Never any Nation or Perſon that own'd a Deity, did ever attempt ſo to circumſcribe him: and it is proportionable only to the licentious profaneneſs of theſe latter days, thus to meaſure immenſity and omnipotence by our own narrow ſcantling.

Which acquaints us with the Majeſty of God.

20. The more genuine and proper effect of theſe ſupernatural truths is to raiſe our admiration of that divine Wiſdom, *whoſe ways are ſo paſt finding out*; and to give us a juſt ſenſe of that infinite diſtance, which is between it, and the higheſt of that Reaſon wherein we ſo pride our ſelves. And the great propriety theſe Doctrines have to that end, may well be reckon'd as one part of their excellency.

And obliges to vertue.

21. Indeed there is no part of our holy Faith, but is naturally productive of ſome peculiar vertue; as the whole ſcheme together engages us to be univerſally *holy in all manner of converſation*, 1 Pet. 1. 15. And it is the ſupereminent advantage true Religion hath over all falſe ones, that it tends to ſo laudable an end.

The heathen Theology miniſtred to vice.

22. The Theology of the Heathens was in many inſtances an extract and quinteſſence of vice. Their moſt ſolemn Rites, and ſacredeſt Myſteries were of ſuch a nature, that inſtead of refining and elevating, they corrupted and debaſed their Votaries; immerſt them in all thoſe abominable pollutions which ſober nature abhorr'd. Whereas the principles of our Faith ſerve to ſpiritualize and rectify us, to raiſe us as much above meer manhood as theirs caſt them below it.

We are greatly advantag'd by having juſt notions of God.

23. And as they are of this vaſt advantage to us, ſo alſo are they juſt to God, in giving us right notions of him. What vile unworthy apprehenſions had the Heathen of their Deities; entitling them not only to the paſſions but even to the crimes of men: making *Jupiter* an adulterer, *Mercury* a thief, *Bacchus* a drunkard, *&c.* proportionably of the reſt? whereas our God is repreſented to us as an eſſence, ſo ſpiritual and incorporal, that we muſt be unbodied our ſelves before we can perfectly conceive what he is: ſo far from the impotent affections and inclinations of men, that he has neither parts, nor paſſions; and is fain to veil himſelf under that diſguiſe, to ſpeak, ſometimes as if he had, merely in condeſcenſion to our groſſer faculties. And again, ſo far from being an example, a patron of vice, that his *eyes are too pure to behold iniquity*, Heb. 1. 13. Holineſs is an eſſential part of his nature, and he muſt deny himſelf to put it off.

His loweſt condeſcenſion in taking our human nature.

24. The greateſt deſcent that ever he made to humanity, was in the Incarnation of the ſecond Perſon: yet even in that, tho he was linked with a ſinful nature, yet he reſerved the perſon immaculate; and while he had all the ſins of the world upon him by imputation, ſuffer'd not any one to be inherent in him.

As alſo his other adorable Attributes.

25. To conclude, the ſcripture deſcribes our God to us by all thoſe glorious Attributes of Infinity, Power and Juſtice, which may render him the proper object of our Adorations and Reverence: and it deſcribes him alſo in thoſe gentler Attributes of Goodneſs, Mercy and Truth, which may excite our love of, and dependance on him. Theſe are repreſentations ſomething worthy of God, and ſuch as impreſs upon our mind great thoughts of him.

Above all the myſtery of Redemption.

26. But never did the divine Attributes ſo concur to exert themſelves, as in the myſtery of our Redemption: where his Juſtice was ſatisfied without diminution to his Mercy; and his Mercy without entrenching on his Juſtice: his Holineſs moſt eminent in his indignation againſt ſin, and yet his Love no leſs ſo in ſparing ſinners: theſe contradictions being reconcil'd, this diſcord compos'd into harmony by his infinite wiſdom. This is that ſtupendous Myſtery into which *the Angels deſir'd to look*, 1 Pet. 1. 12. And this is it which by *the Goſpel is preach'd unto us*; as it follows, verſe 25.

The Scripture to the knowledge of God, adds that of our ſelves.

27. And as the Scripture gives us this knowledge of God, ſo it does alſo of our ſelves; in which too all profitable knowledge is compriſed. It teaches us how vile we were in our original duſt; and how much viler yet in our fall, which would have ſunk us below our firſt principles, ſent us not only to earth, but hell. It ſhews the impotence of our lapſed eſtate; that we are not *able of our ſelves ſo much as to think a good thought*: and it ſhews us alſo the dignity of our renovated eſtate, that we *are heirs of God, and fellow heirs with Chriſt*, Rom. 8. 17. Yet leſt this might puff us up with miſtaken hopes, it plainly acquaints us with the condition on which this depends; that it muſt be our obedience both active and paſſive, which is to intitle us to it: that we muſt *be faithful*

to death, if we mean to inherit a crown of life, Rev. 2. 10. and that *we muſt ſuffer with Chriſt, if we will be glorified with him*, Rom 8. 17. And upon ſuppoſition that we perform our parts of the Condition, it gives us the moſt certain aſſurance, engages God's veracity, that he will not fail on his. By this it gives us ſupport againſt all the adverſities of life; aſſuring us *the ſufferings of it are not worthy to be compared with the glory we expect*, Rom. 8. 18. yea, and againſt the terrors of death too; by aſſuring us that what we look on as a diſſolution, is but a temporary parting; and we only put off our bodies, that they may put off corruption, and be cloathed with immortality.

28. Theſe and the like are the Doctrines the holy Scripture offers to us: and we may certainly ſay, they are *faithful ſayings*, and *worthy of all acceptation*, 1 Tim. 4. 15. The notions it gives us of God are ſo ſublime and great, that they cannot but affect us with a reverence and admiration: and yet withal ſo amiable and endearing, that they cannot but raiſe love and gratitude, affiance and delight.

The doctrins of the Scripture as they are faithful ſayings, ſo alſo worthy of all acceptation.

29. And which is yet more, theſe milder Attributes are apt to inſpirit us with a generous ambition of aſſimilation: excite us to tranſcribe all his inimitable excellencies: in which the very Heathens could diſcern conſiſted the accompliſhment of human felicity.

And are apt to inſpirit with a generous ambition of aſſimilation.

30. And then the knowledge it gives us of our ſelves, does us the kindeſt office imaginable: keeps us from thoſe ſwelling thoughts we are too apt to entertain, and ſhews us the neceſſity of bottoming our hopes upon a firmer foundation: and then again keeps us from being lazy or ſecure, by ſhewing us the neceſſity of our own endeavours. In a word, it teaches us to be humble and induſtrious, and whoſoever is ſo ballaſted, can hardly be ſhipwrack'd.

The knowledge of our ſelves obliges to humility.

31. Theſe are the excellencies of the Doctrinal part of Scripture, which alſo renders them moſt aptly preparative for the perecptive. And indeed, ſo they were deſign'd: the *Caedenda* and the *Agenda* being ſuch inſeparable relations, that whoever parts them, forfeits the advantage of both. The moſt ſolemn profeſſion of Chriſt, the moſt importunate invocations, Lord, Lord, will ſignify nothing to them *which do not the things which he ſays*, Matt. 7. And how excellent, how rational thoſe precepts are which the Scripture propoſes to us from him, is our next point of conſideration.

The Credenda *and* Agenda *are inſeparably link'd together.*

32. The firſt Law which God gave to mankind was that of nature. And tho the impreſſions of it upon the mind be by *Adam*'s fall exceedingly dimm'd and defac'd, yet that derogates nothing from the dignity and worth of that Law, which God hath been ſo far from cancelling, that he ſeems to have made it the rule and ſquare of his ſubſequent Laws: ſo that nothing is injoyn'd in thoſe, but what is conſonant and agreeable to that. The Moral Law given in the Decalogue to the Jews, the Evangelical Law given in the Goſpel to the Chriſtians, have this natural Law for their baſis and foundation. They licenſe nothing which that prohibits, and very rarely prohibit any thing which it licenſes.

The Chriſtian law deſigns the reſtoring that of nature.

33. 'Tis true, Chriſt in his Sermon on the Mount, raiſes Chriſtians to a greater ſtrictneſs than the Jews thought themſelves oblig'd to; but that was not by contradicting either the Natural or Moral Law, but by reſcuing the latter from thoſe corruptions which the falſe gloſſes of the Scribes and Phariſees had mix'd it with; and reducing it to its primitive integrity, and extent. In a word, as the Decalogue was given to repair the defacings, and renew the impreſſions of the natural Law; ſo the

And neither contradicts the natural or Jewiſh law, but reſcues the latter from the gloſſes of Scribes and Phariſees.

the precepts of the Goſpel were deſign'd to revive and illuſtrate both. And accordingly we find Chriſt, in the matter of divorce, calls them back to this natural Law; *In the beginning it was not ſo,* Matt. 19. 8. I ſay not but that even theſe natural notions are in ſome inſtances refin'd and elevated by Chriſt; the ſecond *Adam* being to repair the fall of the firſt with advantage: but yet he ſtill builds upon that ground-work, introduces nothing that is inconſiſtent with it.

The accordance of thoſe laws, is a great recommendation of the Scripture precepts.

34. And this accordance between theſe ſeveral Laws, is a circumſtance that highly recommends Scripture Precepts to us. We cannot imagin but that God who made man for no other end but to be an inſtrument of his glory, and a recipient of all communicable parts of his happineſs, would aſſign him ſuch rules and meaſures as were moſt conducive to thoſe ends. And therefore ſince the Scripture injunctions are of the ſame mold, we muſt conclude them to be ſuch as tend to the perfection of our being; the making us what God originally intended us: and he that would not be that, will certainly chuſe much worſe for himſelf.

The commands of our Saviour are unjuſtly taxed as unreaſonable.

35. I know there have been prejudices taken up againſt the Precepts of Chriſt, as if they impos'd unreaſonable, unſupportable ſtrictneſſes upon men: and ſome have aſſum'd liberty to argue mutinouſly againſt them; nay, againſt God too, for putting ſuch natural appetites into men, and then forbidding them to ſatisfy them.

His reſtraints are ſuitable to human nature in innocence.

36. But the ground of this cavil is the not rightly diſtinguiſhing of natural appetites, which are to be differenc'd according to the two ſtates of rectitude and depravation: thoſe of the firſt rank are the appetites God put into man; and thoſe were all regular and innocent, ſuch as tended to the preſervation of his being: nature in its firſt integrity meaſuring its deſires by its needs. Now Chriſt's prohibitions are not directed againſt theſe, he forbids no one kind of theſe deſires. And tho the precept of ſelf-denial may ſometimes reſtrain us in ſome particular acts, yet that is but proportionable to that reſtraint. *Adam* was under in relation to the forbidden tree, a prrticular inſtance of his obedience, and fence of his ſafety. So that if men would conſider nature under that its firſt and beſt notion, they cannot accuſe Chriſt of being ſevere to it.

But the appetites of corrupted nature are indeed reſtrain'd.

37. But 'tis manifeſt they take it in another acceptation, and mean that corruption of nature which inordinately inclines to ſenſitive things; and on this account they call their riots, their luxuries, appetites put into them by God: whereas 'tis manifeſt this was ſuperinduc'd from another coaſt: the wiſe man gives us its true pedigree in what he ſays of death, which is its twin-ſiſter: *By the envy of the Devil came death into the world,* Wiſd. 2. 24. And can they expect that Chriſt who came to *deſtroy the works of the Devil,* 1 John 3. 8. ſhould frame Laws in their favour, make acts of toleration and indulgence for them? This were to annul the whole deſign of his coming into the world, which was to reſtore us from our lapſt eſtate, and elevate us to thoſe higher degrees of purity which he came not only to preſcribe, but to exemplify to us.

The moſt exorbitant purſuits of vice, we call nature.

38. But in this affair men often take nature in a yet wider and worſe notion; and under natural deſires comprehend whatever upon any ſort of motive they have a mind to do. The awe of a Superior, the importunity of a companion, cuſtom, and example, make men do many ill things, to which their nature would never prompt them; nay, many times ſuch as their nature relucts to, and abhors, 'tis certainly thus in all debauchery and exceſs: 'Tis evident it gratifies no man's nature to be drunk, or to lie under undigeſted loads of meats: theſe are outrages and violences upon nature,

take it only in the moſt ſenſitive notion, ſuch as ſhe ſtruggles to avert; and yet men make her bear, not only the oppreſſion, but the blame too.

39. But beſides, 'tis to be conſider'd, that the nature of man includes reaſon as well as ſenſe, and to this all ſorts of luxury are yet more repugnant, as that which clouds the mind, and degrades the man (who in his conſtitution is a rational being) and ſets him in the rank of meer animals, and certainly theſe can be no appetites of nature, which thus ſubvert it.

Truly ſpeaking, the nature of man includes reaſon as well as ſenſe.

40. The like may be ſaid concerning revenge, particularly that abſurdeſt ſort of it, Duels; which certainly are as great contradictions to nature as can be imagin'd, the unravelling and concealing its very firſt principle of Self-preſervation, (which in other inſtances, men bring in bar againſt duty.) And yet men will ſay the generoſity of their natures compels them to it; ſo making their natures a kind of *felo de ſe* to prompt the deſtroying it ſelf: when alas 'tis only the falſe notion they have got of honour that ſo engages them. And if men would but ſoberly conſider, they muſt be convinc'd that there is nothing more agreeable to reaſon than that precept of Chriſt, of not retaliating injuries; which is in effect but to chuſe a ſingle inconvenience before a long train of miſchiefs. And certainly if nature even in its deprav'd eſtate were left to determine, it would reſolve it a better bargain to go off with a reproachful word, than to loſe a limb, perhaps a life in the revenge of it. There being no maxim more indiſputable, than that of evils the leaſt is to be choſen. And the innate principle of Self-love does more ſtrongly biaſs nature to preſerve it ſelf, than any external thing can to deſtroy it.

Revenge is no true foundation.

41. I know 'twill be ſaid to this, that revenge is a natural appetite: but I ſay ſtill, Self-preſervation is more ſo; and would prevail againſt as much of revenge as is natural, were it not heightned and fortified by fancy, and that Chimera of point of honour, which, as it is now ſtated, is certainly one of the moſt empty nothings that ever was brought in balance with ſolid intereſts. And indeed 'tis to belye nature, and ſuppoſe it to have forfeited all degrees of reaſon, as well as vertue, to faſten ſo abſurd a choice upon her. But admit revenge to be never ſo much the dictate of corrupt Nature, revenge is but a relative to injury: and he that will ſay God put the appetite of revenge into man, muſt ſay he put the appetite of injury into him alſo: which is ſuch an account of the ſixth days creation, as is hardly conſiſtent with God's own teſtimony of its being *very good*, Gen. 1.

Were revenge never ſo much a natural appetite, 'tis not ſo fundamental an one as Self-preſervation.

42. Beſides 'tis certain all the deſires God infus'd into human nature, were ſuch as tended to its preſervation; but this of revenge is of all other the moſt deſtructive, as is too ſadly atteſted by the daily tragical effects of it. In ſhort, the Wiſe-man gives a good ſummary of the whole matter: *God made man upright, but he ſought out many inventions*, Eccl. 7. 29.

Which is contradicted and deſtroy'd by revenge.

43. Now if man hath by his own voluntary act depriv'd himſelf, it would be neither juſt nor kind in God to warp his Laws to man's now diſtorted frame; but it is both, to keep up the perfect rectitude of thoſe, and call upon man to reduce himſelf to a conformity with them: and when to this is added ſuch a ſupply of Grace as may ſilence the plea of diſability, there can nothing be imagin'd more worthy of God, or more indulgent to man.

Were it otherwiſe, God's Laws ought to control our paſſions.

44. And all this Chriſt does in the Goſpel, in thoſe precepts which the blind world makes ſubject to their cavil or ſcorn. It were an eaſie task to evince this in every particular precept of the Goſpel; but I ſhall content my ſelf with the inſtances already given, and not ſwell this Tract by inſiſting upon what has already been the ſubject of ſo many pious and

Which really are kindneſſes to us.

excellent diſcourſes, as muſt already have convinc'd all but the obſtinate.

Fourthly, the promiſſory part.

45. We proceed therefore to a view of the promiſſory parts of Scripture; in which we are firſt in general to obſerve the great goodneſs of God, in making any promiſes at all to us; and next to examine of what nature and excellence theſe promiſes are. And firſt if we conſider how many titles God has to our obedience, we muſt acknowledge he may challenge it as his undoubted right. We are the work of his hands; and if the Potter have power over the clay (the materials whereof are not of his making) much more has God over his creatures, whoſe matter as well as form is wholly owing to him. We are the price of his blood. And if men account purchaſe an indefeſible title, God muſt have abſolute dominion over what he has bought, and at ſo dear a price too as his own blood. Laſtly, we depend upon him for the ſupport of that being he has given us: we live meerly upon his bounty, ſpend upon his ſtock. And what Patron will not expect obſervance from one who thus ſubſiſts by him?

God waves native rites, and treats us as freemen.

46. Yet, as if God had none of theſe claims, theſe pre-ingagements upon us, he deſcends to treat with us as freemen, by way of article and compact; buys his own of us, and engages to reward that obedience, which he might upon the utmoſt penalties exact: which is ſuch an aſtoniſhing indulgence, as our higheſt gratitude cannot reach: and of this the Sacred Scriptures are the evidences and records; and therefore upon that account deſerve at once our reverence, and our joy.

His promiſes are ſo extenſive, as to take in both our preſent and future ſtate.

47. But this will yet further appear, if we look in the ſecond place into the promiſes themſelves; which are ſo extenſive as to take in both our preſent and future ſtate: according to that of the Apoſtle; *Godlineſs hath the promiſe of this life, and of that which is to come,* 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. For the preſent, they are proportion'd to the ſeveral parts of our compoſition, the body and the mind, the outward and the inward man; ſo ſtretching themſelves to all we can really be concern'd for in this world.

48. And firſt for the body, the Old Teſtament abounds in promiſes of this ſort. The firſt part of the 28 of *Deut.* contains a full catalogue of all temporal bleſſings; and thoſe irreverſibly entail'd upon the Iſraelites obedience. The Pſalmiſt tells us, *they that fear the Lord ſhall lack nothing,* Pſal. 34. 9. *that they ſhall not be confounded in the perillous time, and in days of dearth they ſhall have enough,* Pſ. 37. 19. And *Solomon, that the Lord will not ſuffer the righteous to famiſh,* Prov. 10. 3. And tho under the Goſpel, the promiſes of temporal affluence ſeem not ſo large (its deſign being to ſpiritualize us, and raiſe our minds to higher injoyments;) yet it gives us ample ſecurity of ſo much as is really good for us. It ſuperſedes our care for our ſelves by aſſuring us *all theſe things ſhall be added to us,* Matt. 6. 3. that is, *all thoſe things which our heavenly Father knows we have need of,* v. 32. which is all the limitation the context gives. And certainly we have little temptation to fear want, who have him for our provider, *whoſe are all the beaſts of the foreſt, and the cattel upon a thouſand hills,* Pſal. 50. 10.

When he has ſecur'd us from want, 'twill be a great largeſs to ſecure us from abundance.

49. And when we are thus ſecur'd of all things neceſſary, it may perhaps be an equal mercy, to ſecure us from great abundance; which at the beſt, is but a *lading ones ſelf with thick clay,* in the Prophets phraſe, *Hab* 2. 6. but is often a ſnare as well as a burden.

The Goſpel's contracting our appetites makes a better proviſion for us than any affluence could beſtow.

50. Beſides, the Goſpel by its precepts of temperance and ſelf-denial, does ſo contract our appetites, that a competence is a more adequate promiſe to them, than that of ſuperfluity would have been; and 'tis alſo the meaſure wherein all the true ſatisfaction of the ſenſes conſiſt; which are gratify'd with moderate pleaſures, but ſuffocated and overwhelm'd with ex-

ceſſive. The temperate man taſts and reliſhes his portion, whilſt the voluptuous may rather be ſaid to wallow in his plenty than enjoy it.

Not only the neceſſaries of life, but life it ſelf is ſecur'd by Scripture promiſe.

51. And as the neceſſaries of this life, ſo life it ſelf, and the continuance of that is a Scripture promiſe. The fifth Commandment affixes it to one particular duty: but it is in a multitude of places in the Old Teſtament annex'd to general obedience. Thus it is, *Deut.* 11. 9. and again v. 21. And *Solomon* propoſes this practical wiſdom as the multiplier of days: *By me days ſhall be multiply'd, and the years of thy life ſhall be increas'd*, Prov. 9. 11. and chap. 3. *Length of days is in her right hand*, verſe 16. And tho we find not this promiſe repeated in the New Teſtament, yet neither is it retracted: 'tis true, the Goſpel bids us be ready to lay down our lives for Chriſt's ſake, but it tells us withal, that he that will loſe his life, ſhall ſave it: which tho it be univerſally true only in the ſpiritual ſenſe, yet it often proves ſo in a literal. It did ſo eminently in the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, where the moſt reſolute Chriſtians eſcap'd, while the baſe compliers periſh'd together with thoſe they ſought to endear. This is certain, that if the New Teſtament do not expreſly promiſe long life, yet it does by its rules of temperance and ſobriety, contentedneſs and chearfulneſs, very much promote it: and ſo does virtually and efficaciouſly ratify thoſe the Old Teſtament made.

So alſo is reputation.

52. The next outward bleſſing is reputation: and this alſo is a Scripture promiſe. *The wiſe ſhall inherit glory*, Prov. 3. 38. And the vertuous woman *Solomon* deſcribes, is not only bleſſed by her children and husband, but *ſhe is praiſed in the gate*, Pro. 31. *ult.* Nay, this bleſſing is extended even beyond life; *The memory of the juſt ſhall be bleſſed*, Prov. 10. 7. Nor does the Goſpel evacuate this promiſe; but rather prompts us to the ways of having it made good to us, by adviſing us to *abſtain from all appearance of evil*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 22. *to provide for honeſt things, not only in the ſight of God, but alſo in the ſight of men*, 1 Cor. 8. 21.

If revilings happen, they are made moſt honourable.

53. 'Tis true indeed, Chriſt forwarns his Diſciples that they ſhall be revil'd, *and have all manner of evil ſpoken againſt them falſely, for his name ſake*: but then the form transform'd the ſufferings, and made it ſo honourable, that they were *to count it matter of joy*, Matt. 5. 11, 12. Neither was this any paradox even in relation to their reputation; which tho ſullied by a few ill men of that age, yet has been moſt illuſtrious among all Ages ſince. Their ſufferings and indignities gave them a new title of honour, and added the Martyr to the Apoſtle. And the event has been proportionable in all ſucceſſions ſince: thoſe holy men that fill'd up the Pagan Priſons, fill'd up the Churches Dypticks alſo, and have been had as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *in everlaſting remembrance*, Pſalm 112. 6.

The Scripture promiſes look more expreſly to the concerns of the inward man.

54. And as the Scripture Promiſes thus take in all the concerns of the outward man, ſo do they alſo of the inward. The fundamental promiſe of this kind is that of *ſending Chriſt into the world*, and *in him eſtabliſhing the new Covenant*, which we find *Jer.* 31. 31. and is referr'd to by the Author to the Hebrews, *I will put my Laws in their hearts, and write them in their minds, and their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more*, Heb. 10. 16.

Whoſe evils are either impurity or inquietude.

55. And this is ſo comprehenſive a Promiſe as includes all the concerns of the inward man. The evils incident to the mind of man may be reduc'd to two; impurity, and inquietude: and here is a cure to both. The divine Law written in their heart, drives thence all thoſe ſwarms of noyſom luſts, which like the Egyptian Frogs, overrun and putrify the ſoul. Where that is ſeated and enſhrin'd, thoſe can no more ſtand before it than *Dagon* before the Ark. This repairs the divine Image in us (in which conſiſts

the perfection of our nature) *renews us in the ſpirits of our minds, Epheſ.* 4. 22. *and purges our conſciences from dead works*, Heb. 9. 4. which all the Catharticks and Luſtrations among the Heathen, and all the Sacrifices and Ceremonies of the Law were not able to do.

The ſubjection to luſt is the vileſt vaſſalage.

56. Secondly, this promiſe ſecures the mind from that reſtleſneſs and unquietneſs, which attends both the dominion and guilt of ſin. To be ſubject to a man's luſts and corrupt appetites is of all other the vileſt vaſſallage, they are the crueleſt task-maſters, and allow their ſlaves no reſt, no intermiſſion of their drudgery. And then again, the guilt that tortures and racks the mind with dreadful expectations, keeps it in perpetual agitation and tumult; which is excellently deſcrib'd by the Prophet *Iſaiah, The wicked is like the troubled ſea, when it cannot reſt; whoſe waters caſt out mire and dirt: there is no peace ſaith my God to the wicked*, Iſa. 48. 22. How proſperous ſoever vice may ſeem to be in the world, yet there are ſuch ſecret pangs and horrors that dog it, that as *Solomon* ſays, *even in laughter the heart is ſorrowful*, Prov. 14. 13.

From which the Goſpel reſcues.

57. But this Evangelical promiſe of being *merciful to our iniquities, and remembring our ſins no more*, calms this tempeſt, introduces peace and ſerenity into the mind, and reconciles us once to God and our ſelves. And ſure we may well ſay with the Apoſtle, theſe are *great and precious promiſes*, 2 Pet. 1. 4.

The Scriptures give promiſes of grace and divine aſſiſtance.

58. There are beſides many other which ſpring from this principal, as ſuckers from the root: ſuch are the promiſes of freſh ſupplies of grace upon a good employment of the former. *To him that has ſhall be given*, Matt. 25. 29. Nay, even of the ſource and fountain of all grace. *He ſhall give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*, Matt. 7. 11. Such is that of ſupporting us in all difficulties and aſſaults: *the not ſuffering us to be tempted above that we are able*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. which like God's *bow ſet in the clouds*, Gen. 9. is our ſecurity, that we ſhall not be overwhelm'd by any deluge of temptation: and (to inſtance no more) ſuch is that comprehenſive promiſe of hearing our prayers, *Ask and it ſhall be given you*, Matt. 7. 7. This puts all good things within our reach, gives us the key of God's Store-houſe, from whence we may furniſh our ſelves with all that is really good for us. And if a few full Barns could tempt the rich man in the Goſpel, to pronounce a Requiem to his Soul; what notes of acquieſcence may they ſing, who have had the command of an inexhauſtible ſtore; that are ſupply'd by him whoſe is the Earth, and the fulneſs thereof?

Than which nothing can give greater comfort and ſupport amidſt the calamities of life.

59. And certainly, all theſe promiſes together muſt be (to uſe the Apoſtle's phraſe) *ſtrong conſolation*; ſuch as may quiet and calm all the fears and griefs, all the tumults and perturbations of the mind, in relation to its preſent ſtate. But then there are others relating to the future of a much higher elevation: thoſe glories and felicities of another world, which are ſo far beyond our narrow conceptions, that the comprehenſion and injoyment muſt begin together. The Scripture ſhadows it out to us by all the notions we have of happineſs, by *glory*, Rom. 8. 18. by a *kingdom*, Matt. 25. 14. by *joy*, Matt. 25. 21. and, which comprehends all, by *being with the Lord*, 1 Theſſ. 7. 17. *ſeeing him face to face*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. *being like to him*, 1 Joh. 3. 2. In a word, 'tis *bliſs* in the utmoſt extent: immenſe for quantity, and eternal for duration.

The promiſes are of things excellent in their kind, as well as liberal in their degree.

60. And ſurely this promiſe is ſo excellent for kind, ſo liberal in its degree, ſo tranſcendently great in all reſpects, that did it ſtand ſingle, ſtript of all thoſe that relate to this life, it alone would juſtify the name of Goſpel, and be the beſt tidings that ever came to mankind. For alas, if we compare the hopes that other Religions propoſe to their Votaries with theſe,

how baſe, how ignoble are they! The Heathens Elyſium, the Mahumetan Paradiſe, were but higher gratifications of the ſenſual part, and conſequently were depreſſions and debaſements of the rational. So that in effect they provided a heaven for the beaſt, and a hell for the man. We may therefore confidently reſume our concluſion, and pronounce the Scripture promiſes to be ſo divine and excellent, that they could as little have been made, as they can be perform'd by any but an holy and almighty Author.

Their condition ſuch as is no impeachment of their worth.

61. Nor is their being conditional, any impeachment to their worth, but an inhancement. Should God have made them (as ſome fancy he has his decrees) abſolute and irreſpective, he had ſet his promiſes at war with his precepts, and theſe ſhould have superſeded what thoſe injoin. We are all very niggardly towards God, and ſhould have been apt to have ask'd *Judas*'s queſtion; *to what purpoſe is this waſte*, Matt. 26. 8. What needs the labour of the courſe, if the prize be certain? And it muſt have been infinitely below the wiſdom and majeſty of the ſupreme Legiſlator, to make Laws, and then evacuate them by diſpenſing rewards without any aſpect on their obſervance. 'Tis the Sanction which inſpirits the Law, without which the Divine as well as the Human, would to moſt men be a *dead Letter.*

The conditionality of the promiſes, back'd with threats, are deſign'd to force us to happineſs.

62. But againſt this God has abundantly provided, not only by the conditionality of the promiſes, but by the terror of his threats too; which is the laſt part of Scripture which falls under conſideration. And theſe are the moſt direful kinds; and cannot better be illuſtrated than by the oppoſition they ſtand in to the promiſes: for as thoſe included all things that might make men happy, either as to this life or the next; ſo theſe do all that make them miſerable. If we make our reflection on all the particulars of the promiſes, we ſhall find the threats anſwering them as their reverſe or dark ſhadow.

Firſt the threats that concern the outward ſtate.

63. And firſt as concerning the outward ſtate, if we look but into the 28 of *Deut.* we ſhall find, that after all the gracious promiſes which begun the chapter, it finally ends in thunder, in the moſt dreadful denunciations imaginable; and thoſe adapted by a moſt peculiar oppoſition to the former promiſes, as the Reader may ſee at large in that chapter. And the whole tenor of the Scripture goes in the like ſtile. Thus Pſal. 140. 11. *A wicked perſon ſhall not proſper in the earth, evil ſhall hunt the wicked man to overthrow him. The Lord will not ſuffer the righteous to famiſh, but he caſteth out the ſubſtance of the wicked*, Prov. 10. 3. And again, the *righteous eateth to the ſatisfying of his ſoul, but the belly of the wicked ſhall want*, Prov. 13. 25. Multitudes of like general threatnings of temporal improſperity there are every where ſcatter'd throughout the Scripture; and many more apply'd to particular vices, as ſloth, unmercifulneſs, luxury, and the like; which would be here too long to enumerate.

Which are verified notwithſtanding the ſeeming proſperity of wicked men.

64. And altho theſe threatnings may ſeem ſometimes to be literally confuted by the wealth and opulency of wicked men, yet they never miſs of being really and virtually verified. For either their proſperities are very ſhort, and only preparative to a more eminent ruin, which was the Pſalmiſts reſolution of this doubt, *Pſal.* 72. or elſe if God leave them the matter of temporal happineſs, yet he ſubſtracts the vertue and ſpirit of them, renders them empty and unſatisfying. This is well expreſt by the Pſalmiſt in the caſe of the Iſraelites: *He gave them their deſires, and ſent leanneſs withal into their ſoul*, Pſal. 106. 15. and by *Zophar*, Job 20. 22. where ſpeaking of the wicked, he ſaith; *In the fulneſs of his ſufficiency ſhall he be in ſtraits.* And this *Solomon* ſeems to refer to, when he ſaith, *the bleſſing of the Lord maketh rich, he addeth no ſorrow with it*, Prov. 10. 22.

Not only untimely death, but the rotting of the name and a curſe of their poſterity, are threatned to wicked men.

65. Neither is it only the comforts of life, but life it ſelf that is threatned to be taken from wicked men: untimely death is throughout the Old Teſtament frequently mention'd as the guardian of impiety: 'tis often aſſign'd judicially in particular caſes: *He ſhall be cut off from his people,* being the uſual ſentence upon moſt offenders under the Levitical Law. But 'tis alſo menac'd more generally as an immediate judgment from God: *The bloodthirſty and deceitful men ſhall not live out half their days,* Pſal 55. 23. Further yet, their names ſhall putrify as ſoon as their Carcaſſes; *the name of the wicked ſhall rot,* Prov. 10. 7. Nay, both their infamy and their ruine are intail'd upon their poſterity. *The ſeed of evil doers ſhall never be renown'd. Prepare ſlaughter for his children, for the iniquity of their fathers,* Iſa. 14. 20, 21.

Wicked men are aliens from the covenant of grace.

66. If now we look on Scripture threatnings in relation to the mind of man, we ſhall find them yet more ſevere: willful impenitent ſinners being cut off from the benefits of the new Covenant; nor barely ſo, but look'd upon as deſpiſers of it, and that blood of Chriſt in which it was ſeal'd, *Heb.* 10. 29. Nay, as thoſe murderous wretches that ſhed it: *They crucify to themſelves the ſon of God afreſh,* Heb. 6. 6. And this is the fataleſt ſentence that can fall on any man in this life; and be thus disfranchiſed of all the privileges of the Goſpel, and rank'd as well in puniſhment as guilt, with the moſt criminous of mankind.

And at laſt brought to a ſtate of reprobation.

67. From hence 'tis conſequent that the mind remains not only in its native impurity, but in a greater and more incurable one; whilſt that blood which alone could cleanſe it, ſerves but to imbrue and pollute it; and as it were fluſh, and excite it to all immanities and vileneſſes: and *he that is* thus *filthy,* 'tis the doom pronounc'd againſt him, that he *ſhall be filthy ſtill,* Rev. 22. 11.

Nothing can be more miſerable than this profligate condition.

68. And then in the ſecond place, what calm can there be to ſuch a mind? What remains to ſuch a Perſon, but that *fearful expectation of wrath and fiery indignation,* which the Apoſtle mentions, *Heb.* 10. 27.? Indeed, were there none but temporal miſchiefs to fear, yet it were very unpleaſant to think ones ſelf like *Cain,* out-law'd from the preſence and protection of God, to be affraid *that every man that meets us ſhould ſlay us,* Gen. 4. 14. Nay, thoſe diffus'd inſtinct fears of indefinite evils which attend guilt, are very unquiet, uneaſie inmates in the mind. This is excellently deſcrib'd by *Moſes*; *The Lord ſhall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and ſorrow of mind, and thy life ſhall hang in doubt before thee, and then thou ſhalt fear day and night; in the morning thou ſhalt ſay, would God it were evening, and in the evening, would God it were morning,* Deut. 28. 65, 66, 67.

Gods wrath comprehends all that human nature can ſuffer.

69. And what can be more wretched than to have a mind thus agitated and toſs'd, rack'd and tortur'd; eſpecially when through all theſe clouds it ſees a glimpſe of the eternal Tophet, and knows, that from the billows of this uneaſie ſtate, it muſt be toſs'd into that Lake of fire. And this is indeed *the dregs of the cup of God's wrath,* the dreadfulleſt and moſt aſtoniſhing of all Scripture denunciations. This comprehends all that the nature of man is capable of ſuffering. Divines diſtinguiſhing it into the pain of ſenſe, and of loſs: that of ſenſe is repreſented to us in Scripture by fire; and that accended, and rendred noiſom as well as painful, by Brimſtone, that afflicts the ſmell as well as the touch: ſometimes by *outer darkneſs, wailing and gnaſhing of teeth,* to grate the ears and conſume the eyes; by intolerable thirſt, to torment the palate. Not that we are to think the ſenſitive pains of Hell do not infinitely exceed all

theſe; but becauſe theſe are the higheſt meaſures our preſent capacities can make, and are adequate to thoſe ſenſes for whoſe carnal ſatisfactions we incur them.

Pain of ſenſe ſeems outdone by that of loſs.

70. The pain of loſs is yet more diſmal, as being ſeated in the Soul, whoſe ſpiritual nature will ſerve it only to render its torments more refin'd and acute. With what anguiſh will it then ſee itſelf baniſh'd from the preſence of God; and conſequently from all that may give ſatisfaction and bliſs to the creature? But yet, with how much deeper anguiſh will it reflect on it ſelf as the Author of that deprivation? How will it recollect the many deſpis'd tenders of Grace, the eaſy terms on which ſalvation might have been had? and how ſadly will conſcience then revenge all its ſtifled admonitions by an unſilenceable clamour, *that worm which never dies*, Mark 9. 48? How wounding will it then be *to ſee* Abraham, Iſaac *and* Jacob, and all the Saints *in the kingdom of God*, Luke 13. 28. (nay, that poor *Lazarus* whom here men turn'd to the charity of their dogs) and it ſelf in the company of the Devil and his Angels, who then upbraid what they once intic'd to.

Which has the embitterments of ſhame and deſpair.

71. Nature abhors nothing more than to have our miſery inſulted over by thoſe who drew us into it: yet that no circumſtance may be lacking to their torment, this muſt be the perpetual entertainment of damn'd Souls. And to all this Eternity is the diſmal adjunct; which is of all other circumſtances the moſt diſconſolate, as leaving not ſo much as a glimpſe of hopes; which here uſes ſtill to be the reſerve, and laſt reſort of the miſerable;

Eſpecially having that laſt heightning circumſtance of Eternity.

72. This Eternity is that which gives an edge, infuſes a new acrimony into the torment: and is the higheſt ſtrain, the vertical point of miſery. Theſe are thoſe *terrors of the Lord*, with which the Scripture acquaints us: and ſure we cannot ſay that theſe are flat contemptible menaces; but ſuch as ſuit the dreadful Majeſty of that *God who is a conſuming fire*, Heb. 12. 29. So that theſe are as aptly accommodated for the exciting our dread, as the promiſes were of our love: both jointly concur to awake our induſtry.

But God's goodneſs has made theſe threats conditional as well as his promiſes.

73. For God has been ſo good to mankind, as to make the threats conditional as well as the promiſes: ſo that we as well know the way to avoid the one as we do to attain the other. Nor has he any other intendment or end in promiſing them, but that we may do ſo. See to this purpoſe with what ſolemnity he proteſts it by *Moſes*; *I call heaven and earth to record againſt you this day, that I have ſet before you life and death, bleſſing and curſing; therefore chuſe life, that both thou and thy ſeed may live*, Deut. 30. 19.

In all reſpects the Scripture appears to be correſpondent to its Author.

74. I have now run through the ſeveral parts of Scripture I propoſed to ſpeak of. And tho I have in each given rather ſhort inſtances and eſſays than an exact deſcription, yet even in theſe contracted lineaments the exquiſite proportions may be diſcern'd. And if the Reader ſhall hence be incourag'd to extend his contemplations, and as he reads Holy Scripture, obſerve it in all its graces, and full dimenſions, I doubt not he will pronounce from his experience, the matter of the Divine Book is very correſpondent to the Author: which is the higheſt Eulogy imaginable.

The Holy Scripture conſider'd in relation to its end.

75. In the next place we are to conſider the Holy Scripture in relation to its end and deſign; in proportion to which, every thing is more or leſs valuable. The moſt exquiſite frame, and curious contrivance, that has no determinate end or uſe, is but a piece of induſtrious folly, a *Spider's web*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Iſa.* 59. 5. Now thoſe deſigns have always been

eſteem'd the moſt excellent that have had the moſt worthy ſubjects, and been of the greateſt extent. Accordingly thoſe who have projected the obliging and benefiting of other men (tho but within a private Sphere) have always been look'd on as men of generous and noble deſigns. Thoſe who have taken their level higher, and directed their aim to a more publick good, tho but of a City or Nation, have proportionably acquir'd a greater eſteem. But thoſe who have aſpir'd to be univerſal benefactors, to do ſomething for the common benefit of the world, their fame has commonly reach'd as far as their influence; men have reverenc'd, nay ſometimes (according to the common exceſſes of man's nature) ador'd them. Many of the Heathen Deities (eſpecially their Demi-gods) having been only thoſe perſons, who by introducing ſome uſeful Art, or other part of knowledge, had oblig'd mankind. So we ſee what natural gratitude men are apt to pay to worthy and generous deſigns. And if we will be content but to ſtand to this common award of our nature, the Scripture will have the faireſt claim imaginable to our reverence and thankfulneſs upon this very account of the excellency of its deſigns.

Things are valuable with us from the profit they bring, and their diffuſiveneſs.

76. Nor need we borrow the balance of the Sanctuary to weigh them in, we may do it in our own ſcales; for they exactly anſwer the two properties above mention'd of profit and diffuſiveneſs, which in ſecular concerns are the ſtandard rules of good deſigns. For firſt, it is the ſole ſcope and aim of Scripture, the very end for which 'twas writ, to benefit and advantage men; and that ſecondly, not only ſome ſmall ſelect number, ſome little angle or corner of the World, but the whole race of mankind, the entire univerſe; and he that can imagine a more diffuſive deſign, muſt imagine more worlds alſo.

The end of the Scripture is our good.

77. Now for the firſt of theſe, that it is the deſign of the Scripture to benefit men, we need appeal but to Scripture it ſelf; which ſurely can give account to what end 'tis directed; and that tells us, it *is to make us wiſe unto ſalvation*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. In which is comprehended the greateſt benefit that men's nature is capable of: the making us wiſe while we live here, and the ſaving us eternally. And this ſure is the moſt generous, the moſt obliging deſign, that 'tis poſſible even for the Creator to have upon the Creature: and this is it that which the holy Scripture negotiates with us.

To make wiſe

78. And firſt, the making us wiſe, is ſo inviting a propoſal to humanity, that we ſee when that was much wiſer than now it is, it caught at a fallacious tender of it; the very ſound of it, tho out of the Devil's mouth, faſcinated our firſt Parents, and hurried them to the higheſt diſobedience and certaineſt ruin. And therefore now God by the holy Scriptures makes us an offer as much more ſafe, as it is more ſincere; when he ſends his word to us to be *a lamp to our feet, and a light to our paths*, Pſal. 119. 105. to teach us all that is good for us to know, our affectation of ignorance will be more culpable than theirs of knowledge, if we do not admire the kindneſs, and embrace the bounty of ſuch a tender.

Not indeed in the popular notion.

79. Now the making us wiſe, muſt be underſtood according to the Scripture notion of wiſdom, which is *not the wiſdom of this world, nor of the Princes of this world, which comes to naught*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 Cor. 2. 5. *but that wiſdom which deſcends from above*, Jam. 3. 17. which he there deſcribes to be *firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle and eaſy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſy*. Indeed the Scripture uſually comprehends theſe and all other graces under Wiſdom; for it makes it ſynonymous to that which includes them all, *viz.* the fear

of the Lord. Thus we find throughout the whole Book of Proverbs theſe us'd as terms convertible. In ſhort, Wiſdom is that practical knowledge of God and our ſelves, which engages us to obedience and duty; and this is agreeable to that definition the Wiſe-man gives of it; *The wiſdom of the prudent is to underſtand his way*, Prov. 14. 8. Without this, all the moſt refin'd and aerial ſpeculations, are but like *Tales*'s ſtar-gazing; which ſecur'd him not from falling into the water; nay, betray'd him to it. In this is all ſolid wiſdom compris'd.

It leads to our true intereſts.

80. The utmoſt all the wiſe men in the world have pretended to, is but to know what true happineſs is, and what is the means of attaining it: and what they ſought with ſo much ſtudy, and ſo little ſucceſs, the Scripture preſents us with in the greateſt certainty, and plaineſt characters, ſuch as *he that runs may read*, Hab. 2. 2. It acquaints us with that ſupreme felicity, that chief good whereof Philoſophy could only give us a name; and it ſhews us the means, marks us out a path which will infallibly lead us to it. Accordingly we find that *Solomon* after all the accurate ſearch he had made to find *what was that good for the ſons of men*; he ſhuts up his inqueſt in this plain concluſion; *Fear God and keep his Commandments*; *for God ſhall bring every work unto judgment*, Eccleſ. 12. 15, 16. The regulating our lives ſo by the rules of Piety, as may acquit us at our final account, is the moſt eligible thing that falls within human cognizance; and that not only in relation to the ſuperlative happineſs of the next world, but even to the quiet and tranquility of this. For alas, we are impotent giddy creatures, ſway'd ſometimes by one paſſion, ſometimes by another; nay often the interfering of our appetites, makes us irreſolute which we are to gratify, whilſt in the interim their ſtrugling agitates and turmoils the mind. And what can be more deſirable in ſuch a caſe, than to put our ſelves under a wiſer conduct than our own, and as oppreſt States us'd to defeat all leſſer pretenders by becoming homagers to ſome more potent: ſo for us to deliver our ſelves from the tyranny of our luſts, by giving up our obedience to him whoſe ſervice is perfect freedom.

Shews every man the terms of his ſubjection.

81. Were there no other advantage of the exchange, but the bringing us under fix'd and determinate Laws, 'twere very conſiderable. Every man would gladly know the terms of his ſubjection, and have ſome ſtanding rule to guide himſelf by; and God's Laws are ſo, we may certainly know what he requires of us: but the mandates of our paſſions are arbitrary and extemporary: what pleaſes them to day, diſguſts them to morrow; and we muſt always be in readineſs to do we know not what, and of all the Arbitrary governments that men either feel or fear, this is doubtleſs the moſt miſerable. I wiſh our apprehenſions of it were but as ſenſible: and then we ſhould think the Holy Scripture did us the office of a Patriot, in offering us a reſcue from ſo vile a ſlavery.

Shews the ſervility of being engag'd by luſt and ſenſuality.

82. And that it does make us this offer, is manifeſt by the whole tenor of the Bible. For firſt it rouzes and awakes us to a ſenſe of our condition, ſhews us that what we call liberty, is indeed the ſaddeſt ſervitude; that *he that committeth ſin, is the ſervant of ſin*, John 8. 34. that thoſe vices which pretend to ſerve and gratify us, do really ſubdue and enſlave us, and fetter when they ſeem to embrace: and whereas the will in all other oppreſſions retains its liberty, this tyranny brings that alſo into vaſſalage: renders our ſpirits ſo mean and ſervile, that we chuſe bondage; are apt to ſay with the Iſraelites, *Let us alone that we may ſerve the Egyptians*, Exod. 14. 12.

And animates to recover liberty.

83. And what greater kindneſs can be done for people in this forlorn abject condition, than to animate them to caſt off the yoke, and recover their freedom?

freedom. And to this are moſt of the Scripture exhortations addreſt; as may be ſeen in a multitude of places, particularly in the ſixth chapter to the *Romans*, the whole ſcope whereof is directly to this purpoſe.

Gives weapons and armour for the reſcue.

84. Nor does it only ſound the alarm, put us upon the conteſt with our enemies, but it aſſiſts us in it, and furniſhes us with the ***whole armour of God***, which we find deſcrib'd *Eph. 6. 13.* Nay farther, it excites our courage, by aſſuring us, that if we will not baſely ſurrender our ſelves, we can never be overpower'd if we do but ſtand our ground; reſiſt our enemy, he *will fly from us* James 4. 7. And to that purpoſe it directs us under what banner we are to liſt our ſelves; even his who ***hath ſpoil'd principalities and powers***, Col 2. 15. to whoſe conduct and diſcipline, if we conſtantly adhere, we cannot miſs of victory.

Sets before us the prize of the conqueſt.

85. And then laſtly, it ſets before us the prize of this conqueſt; that we ſhall not only recover our liberty, manumit our ſelves from the vileſt bondage to the vileſt and crueleſt oppreſſors; but we ſhall be crown'd for it too, be rewarded for being kind to our ſelves, and be made happy eternally hereafter for being willing to be happy here.

And qualifies for the rewards of it.

86. And ſure theſe are terms ſo apparently advantageous, that he muſt be infinitely ſtupid, fooliſh to deſtruction, that will not thus be made wiſe unto ſalvation, that deſpiſes or cavils at this divine Book, which means him ſo much good, which deſigns to make him live here generouſly, and according to the dignity of his nature, and in the next world to have that nature ſublimated and exalted, made more capacious of thoſe refin'd and immenſe felicities, which there await all who will qualify themſelves for them; who (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) ***by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life***, Rom. 2. 7.

The Scriptures conſult for our temporal intereſt.

87. But beſides the greateſt and principal advantages which concern our ſpiritual intereſt, it takes in alſo the care of our ſecular, directs us to ſuch a managery of our ſelves, as is naturally apt to promote a quiet and happy life. Its injunction to live peaceably with all men, keeps us out of the way of many miſadventures, which turbulent unruly ſpirits meet with, and ſo ſecures our peace. So alſo as to wealth, it puts us into the faireſt road to riches, by preſcribing diligence in our callings: what is thus got being like ſound fleſh, which will ſtick by us; whereas the haſty growth of ill-gotten wealth is but a tumor and impoſtume, which the bigger it ſwells, the ſooner it burſts and leaves us lanker than before. In like manner it ſhews us alſo how to guard our reputation, by ***providing honeſt things not only in the ſight of God, but alſo in the ſight of men***, 2 Cor. 8. 21. ***abſtaining even from all appearance of evil***, 1 Theſſ. 5. 22. ***and making our light ſhine before men***, Matt. 5. 16. It provides too for our eaſe and tranquility, ſuperſeeds our anxious cares and ſolicitudes, by directing us to ***caſt our burden upon the Lord***, Pſal. 55. 22. and by a reliance on his providence how to ſecure to our ſelves all we really want. Finally, it fixes us in all the changes, ſupports us under all the preſſures, comforts us amidſt all the calamities of this life, be aſſuring us they ſhall ***all work together for good to thoſe that love God***, Rom. 8. 28.

And that not only perſonal, but in reference to communities.

88. Nor does the Scripture deſign to promote our intereſts conſider'd only ſingly and perſonally, but alſo in relation to Societies and Communities; it gives us the beſt rules of diſtributive and commutative Juſtice; teaches us to *render to all their dues*, Rom. 13. 7. to keep our words, to obſerve inviolably all our pacts and contracts; nay tho ***they prove to our damage***, Pſal. 15. 4. and to preſerve exact fidelity and truth; which are the ſinews of human commerce. It infuſes into us noble and generous principles, to prefer a common good before our private: and that higheſt flight of Ethnic

vertue, that of dying for ones Country, is no more than the Scripture preſcribes even for our common brethren, 1 *John* 3. 16.

89. But beſides theſe Generals, it deſcends to more minute directions accommodated to our ſeveral circumſtances; it gives us appropriate rules in reference to our diſtinct relation, whether natural, civil, eccleſiaſtical, or œconomical. And if men would but univerſally conform to them, to what a bleſſed harmony would it tune the world? What order and peace would it introduce; there would then be no oppreſſive Governors, nor mutinous Subjects; no unnatural Parents, nor contumacious Children: no idle Shepherds, or ſtraying Flocks: none of thoſe domeſtick jars which oft diſquiet, and ſometimes ſubvert families: all would be calm and ſerene; and give us in reality that golden Age, whereof Poets did but dream.

That it do's in reference to all intereſts, whether civil, eccleſiaſtical, or œconomical.

90. This tendency of the Scripture is remarkably acknowledg'd in all our publick Judicatories, where before any teſtimony is admitted, we cauſe the perſon that is to give his teſtimony, firſt to lay hold of with his hands, then with his mouth to kiſs the Holy Scriptures: as if it were impoſſible for thoſe hands, which held the myſteries of Truth, to be immediately imploy'd in working falſhood; or that thoſe lips which had ador'd thoſe holy Oracles, ſhould be polluted with perjuries and lyes. and I fear, the civil Government is exceedingly ſhaken at this day in its firmeſt foundation, by the little regard is generally had of the Holy Scriptures, and what is conſequent thereto, the oaths that are taken upon them.

This tendency of the Scripture is acknowledg'd in our publick Judicatories, where no teſtimony is admitted, till the witneſs has kiſt the book.

91. 'Tis true, we are far remov'd from that ſtate which *Iſaiah* propheſied of under the Goſpel, tho we have the Bible among us; that when *the Law ſhould go forth of Sion and the word of the Lord from Jeruſalem they ſhould beat their ſwords into plow-ſhares, and their ſpears into pruning-hooks*, Eſa. 2. 4. but that is not from any defect in it, but from our own perverſeneſs: *we have it* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in another ſenſe) *as if we had it not*, 1 Cor. 7. 29. We have it, (that is, uſe it) to purpoſes widely different from what it means. Some have it as a *Superſedeas* to all the duty it injoins; and ſo they can but cap Texts, talk glibly of Scripture, are not at all concern'd to practiſe it: ſome have it as their Arſenal, to furniſh them with weapons, not againſt their ſpiritual enemies, but their ſecular: applying all the damnatory ſentences they there find, to all thoſe to whoſe perſons or opinions they have prejudice. And ſome have it as a Scene of their mirth, a topic of raillery, dreſs their prophane and ſcurrilous Jeſts in its language; and ſtudy it for no other end but to abuſe it. And whilſt we treat it at this vile rate, no wonder we are never the better for it. For alas, what will it avail us to have the moſt ſoveraign Balſam in our poſſeſſion, if inſtead of applying it to our wounds, we trample it under our feet.

That we have not the prophecy fulfill'd of beating ſwords into plow-ſhares, is not from the defect in the Scripture, but our perverſeneſs.

92. But tho we may fruſtrate the uſe, we cannot alter the nature of things. God's deſign in giving us the Scripture, was to make us as happy as our nature is capable of being; and the Scripture is excellently adapted to this end: for as to our eternal felicity, all that believe there is any ſuch ſtate, muſt acknowledge the Scripture chalks us out the ready way to it: not only becauſe 'tis dictated by God, who infallibly knows it, but alſo by its preſcribing thoſe things which are in themſelves beſt; and which a ſober Heathen would adjudge fitteſt to be rewarded. And as to our temporal happineſs, I dare appeal to any unprejudic'd man, whether any thing can contribute more to the peace and real happineſs of mankind, than the uni-

Tho we can fruſtrate the uſe, we cannot alter the nature of things.

verſal practice of the Scripture rules would do. Would God we would all conſpire to make the experiment; and then doubtleſs, not only our reaſon, but our ſenſe too would be convinc'd of it.

The benefit of the Scripture is as extenſive as great.

93. And as the deſign is thus beneficial, ſo in the ſecond place is it as extenſive alſo. Time was when the Jews had the incloſure of Divine Revelation; when the Oracles of God were their peculiar *depoſitum,* and the *Heathen had the knowledge of his Laws,* Pſal. 147. *ult.* but ſince that by the goodneſs of God, the *Gentiles* are become *fellow-heirs,* Eph. 3. 6. he hath alſo deliver'd into their hands the deeds and evidences of their future ſtate, given them the Holy Scriptures as the exact and authentick regiſters of the covenant between God and man, and theſe not to be like the heathen Oracles appropriated to ſome one or two particular places, ſo that they cannot be conſulted but at the expence of a pilgrimage; but laid open to the view of all that will believe themſelves concern'd.

The Goſpel is preach'd to every creature.

94. It was a large commiſſion our Saviour gave his Diſciples; *Go, preach the Goſpel to every creature,* Mark 16. 15. (which in the narroweſt acception muſt be the Gentile world) and yet their oral Goſpel did not reach farther than the written: for whereever the Chriſtian Faith was planted, the Holy Scriptures were left as the records of it; nay, as the conſervers of it too, the ſtanding rule by which all corruptions were to be detected. 'Tis true, the entire Canon of the Teſtament as we now have it, was not all at once deliver'd to the Church; the Goſpels and Epiſtles being ſucceſſively writ, as the need of Chriſtians, and the encroachments of Hereticks gave occaſion: but at laſt they became all together the common magazine of the Church, to furniſh arms both defenſive and offenſive. For as the Goſpel puts in our hands the ſhield of Faith, ſo the Epiſtles help us to hold it, that it may not be wreſted out of our hands again, either by the force of perſecution, or the ſly inſinuations of vice or hereſie.

And conſign'd in writing, not only to eſtabliſh Faith, but diſcover and beat down growing errors.

95. Thus the Apoſtles like prudent leaders, have beat up the Ambuſhes, diſcover'd the ſnares that were laid for us; and by diſcomfiting Satan's forlorn hope, that earlieſt ſet of falſe teachers and corrupt practices which then invaded the Church, have laid a foundation of victory to the ſucceeding Ages, if they will but keep cloſe to their conduct, adhere to thoſe ſacred writings they have left behind them in every Church for that purpoſe.

Which writings as they are every ones concern and property, are no man's incloſure.

96. Now what was there depoſited, was deſign'd for the benefit of every particular member of that Church. The Bible was not committed (like the *Regalia,* or rarities of a Nation) to be kept under lock and key (and conſequently to conſtitute a profitable office for the keepers) but expos'd like the Brazen Serpent, for univerſal view and benefit: that ſacred Book (like the common air) being every man's propriety, yet no mans incloſure: yet there are a generation of men whoſe eyes have been evil, becauſe God's have been good: who have ſeal'd up this ſpring, monopoliz'd the word of Life, and will allow none to partake of it but ſuch perſons, and in ſuch proportions as they pleaſe to retail it: an attempt very inſolent in reſpect of God, whoſe purpoſe they contradict; and very injurious in reſpect of man, whoſe advantage they obſtruct. The iniquity of it will be very apparent, if we conſider what is offer'd in the following Section.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

The Cuſtody of the Holy Scripture is a privilege and right of the Chriſtian Church, and every member of it; which cannot without impiety to God, and injuſtice unto it and them, be taken away or impeach'd.

The keeping of the Law is either obſequious or poſſeſſory.

BEſides the keeping of the Divine Law, which is obſequious, and imports a due regard to all its Precepts, commonly expreſt in Scripture, by *keeping the commandments harkening to, and obeying the voice of the Lord, walking in his ways and obſerving and doing his ſtatutes and his judgments*: there is a poſſeſſory keeping it in reference to our ſelves and others; in reſpect whereof, Almighty God, *Deut. 6.* and elſewhere, frequently having enjoyn'd the People of *Iſrael to love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their ſoul, and with all their might, and that the words which he commanded them, ſhould be in their hearts*; he adds *that they ſhall teach them diligently to their children, and ſhall talk of them when they ſit down in their houſes, and when they walk by the way, and when they lie down and when they riſe up: and that they bind them for a ſign upon their hand, and that they ſhall be as frontlets between their eyes, and that they ſhall write them upon the poſts of their houſe, and on their gates.* So juſtly was the Law call'd the Scripture, being written by them, and worn upon the ſeveral parts of the body, inſcrib'd upon the walls of their Houſes, the entrance of their doors, and gates of their Cities; and in a word, placed before their eyes whereever they convers'd.

The poſſeſſory keeping was matter of privilege to the Jews.

2. And this was granted to the Jews, as matter of privilege and favour: *To them* ſays St. *Paul*, Rom. 9. 4. *pertaineth the adoption and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law.* And the ſame St. *Paul* at the 3 chap. 2 v. of that Epiſtle, unto the queſtion, *what advantage hath the Jew, or what profit is their circumciſion?* anſwers, that it is *much every way, chiefly becauſe unto them were committed the Oracles of God.* This *depoſitum* or truſt was granted to the Fathers, that it ſhould be continued down unto the children. *He made a covenant*, ſays *David*, Pſal. 78. v. 5. *with Jacob, and gave Iſrael a law, which he commanded our fore fathers to teach their children, that their poſterity might know it, and the children which are yet unborn: to the intent, that when they came up, they might ſhew their children the ſame.* Which Scripture by a perpetual ſucceſſion, was to be handed down unto the Chriſtian Church; the Apoſtles on all occaſions appealing unto them, as being *read in the Synagogues every Sabbath day*, Acts 13. 27. and alſo privately in their hands; ſo that they might at pleaſure *ſearch into them*, John 5. 39. Acts 17. 11. Hereupon the Jews are by S. *Auſtin* call'd the *Capſarii*, or ſervants that carried the Chriſtians Books. And *Athanaſius* in his Tract of the Incarnation, ſays, *The Law was not for the Jews only, nor were the Prophets ſent for them alone; but that Nation was the Divinity-School of the whole World; from whence they were to fetch the knowledge of God, and the way of ſpiritual living:* which amounts to what the Apoſtle ſays, Gal. 3. 34. *That the Law was a Schoolmaſter to bring us unto Chriſt.*

And is continued to the Chriſtians.

3. And 'tis obſervable, that the very ſame word, *Rom.* 3. 2. in the Text even now recited, which expreſſes the committing of the Oracles of God to the Jews, is made uſe of conſtantly by St. *Paul*, when he declares

the truſt and duty incumbent on him in the preaching of the Goſpel: of which, ſee 1 *Cor.* 9. 17. *Gal.* 2. 7. *Theſ.* 2. 4. 1 *Tim.* 1. 11. *Tit.* 1. 3. And therefore, as he ſays, 1 *Cor.* 9. 16, 17. *Tho I preach the Goſpel, I have nothing to glory of; for neceſſity is laid upon me, yea, wo is unto me if I preach not the goſpel; for if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if againſt my will, a diſpenſation of the goſpel is committed unto me.* So may all Chriſtians ſay; if we our ſelves keep and tranſmit to our poſterities the Holy Scriptures, we have nothing to glory of, for a neceſſity is laid upon us, and woe be unto us if we do not our ſelves keep, and tranſmit to our poſterity the Holy Scriptures. If we do this thing willingly, we have a reward; but if againſt our will, the cuſtody of the Goſpel, and at laſt that diſpenſation of it is committed to us. But if we are Traditors, and give up our Bibles, or take them away from others; let us conſider how black an apoſtacy and ſacrilege we ſhall incur.

The Moſaic law was a temporary conſtitution.

4. The Moſaic Law was a temporary conſtitution, and only *a ſhadow of good things to come,* Heb. 10. 1. but the Goſpel being in its duration as well as its intendment, *everlaſting,* Rev. 14. 6. and to remain *when time ſhall be no more,* Rev. 10. 6. it is an infinitely more precious *depoſitum,* and ſo with greater care and ſolemner atteſtation to be preſerv'd. Not only the Clergy, or the people of one particular Church, nor the Clergy of the univerſal are intruſted with this care; but 'tis the charge, the privilege and duty of every Chriſtian man, that either is, or was, or ſhall be in the world; even that collective Church which above all competition, *is the pillar and ground of truth.* 1 Tim. 3. 15. againſt which the aſſaults of man and devils, and even the *gates of hell ſhall not prevail,* Matt. 16. 18.

The Goſpels and Epiſtles were directed to the Chriſtian Church.

5. The Goſpels were not written by their holy Penmen to inſtruct the Apoſtles, but to the Chriſtian Church, *that they might believe Jeſus was the Chriſt, the ſon of God, and that believing, they might have life through his name,* Jo. 20. 41. The Epiſtles were not addreſt peculiarly to the Biſhops and Deacons, *but all the holy brethren to the churches of God that are ſanctified in Jeſus Chriſt, and to all thoſe that call upon the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1, 2. 2 Cor. 1. 1. Gal. 1. 2. Eph. 1. 1. Col. 4. 16. 1 Theſſ. 5. 27. Phil. 1. 1. Jam. 1. 1. 1 Pet. 1. 1. 2 Pet. 1. 1. Rev. 1. 4. Or if by chance ſome one or two of the Epiſtles were addreſt to an Eccleſiaſtick perſon, as thoſe to *Timothy* and *Titus*; their purport plainly refers to the community of Chriſtians, and the *depoſitum* committed to their truſt, 1 *Tim.* 6. 20. And S. *John* on the other ſide directs his Epiſtles to thoſe who were plainly ſecular; to fathers, young men, and little children: and a Lady and her children, Epiſt. 1. ch. 2. 12, 13, 14. and Epiſt. 2. 1. 1.

Theſe are not a bare depoſitum, *but the Teſtament of our Saviour.*

6. But beſides the intereſt which every Chriſtian has in the cuſtody of the Scripture upon the account of its being a *depoſitum* intruſted to him, he has alſo another no leſs forcible; that 'tis the Teſtament of his Saviour, by which he becomes a Son of God, *no more a Servant; but a Son; and if he be a Son,* 'tis the Apoſtle's inference, that he is *then an heir, an heir of God thro' Chriſt,* Gal. 4. 7. Now, as he who is heir to an eſtate, is alſo to the deeds and conveyance thereof; which without injury cannot be detain'd, or if they be, there is a remedy at Law for the recovery of them; ſo it fares in our Chriſtian inheritance: every Believer by the privilege of faith, is made a ſon of *Abraham,* and an heir of the promiſes made unto the fathers, whereby he has an hereditary intereſt in the old Teſtament; and alſo by the privilege of the ſame Faith, he has a firm right to the *purchaſt poſſeſſion,* Eph. 1. 14. and the charter thereof, the New. Therefore the detention of the Scriptures, which are made up of theſe two

parts, is a manifeſt injuſtice, and ſacrilegious invaſion of right, which the perſon wrong'd is impower'd, nay is ſtrictly oblig'd by all lawful means to vindicate.

The detention of theſe from the perſons concern'd is ſacrilegious invaſion.

7. Which invaſion of right will appear more flagrant when the nature and importance of it is conſider'd; which relating to men's ſpiritual intereſts, renders the violation infinitely more injurious than it could be in any ſecular. I might mention ſeveral detriments conſequent to this detention of Scripture, even as many as there are benefits appendant to the free uſe of it: but there is one of ſo fundamental and comprehenſive a nature, that I need name no more; and that is, that it delivers men up to any deluſion their teachers ſhall impoſe upon them by depriving them of means of detecting them. Where there is no ſtandard or meaſures, 'tis eaſie for men to falſifie both, and no leſs eaſie is it to adulterate doctrines, where no recourſe can be had to the primary rule. Now, that there is a poſſibility that falſe teachers may ariſe, we have all aſſurance; nay, we have the word of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, that it ſhould be ſo: and all Eccleſiaſtick ſtory to atteſt it has been ſo. And if in the firſt and pureſt times (thoſe ages of more immediate illumination) the *God of this world* found inſtruments whereby to *blind mens minds* 2 Cor. 4. 4. it cannot be ſuppos'd impoſſible or improbable he ſhould do ſo now.

The magiſterial detention of the Scriptures, falls under our Saviours doom of taking away the key of knowledge.

8. But to leave generals, and to ſpeak to the caſe of that Church which magiſterially prohibits Scripture to the vulgar: ſhe manifeſtly ſtands liable to that charge of our Saviour, *Luke* 11. 52. *Ye have taken away the key of knowledge:* and by allowing the common people no more Scripture than what ſhe affords them in her Sermons and private manuals, keeps it in her power to impoſe on them what ſhe pleaſes. For 'tis ſure thoſe portions ſhe ſelects for them, ſhall be none of thoſe which claſh with the doctrines ſhe recommends: and whenever ſhe will uſe this power to the corrupting their Faith, or Worſhip, (yea, or their manners either) they muſt brutiſhly ſubmit to it, becauſe they cannot bring their dictates to the teſt.

The plea of infallibility. is no juſtification.

9. But 'twill be ſaid, this danger ſhe wards by her doctrine of infallibility: that is, ſhe enervates a probable ſuppoſition atteſted by event, by an impoſſible one confuted by event. For 'tis certain that all particular Churches may err; and tho the conſciouſneſs of that, forces the Roman Church upon the abſurd pretence of univerſality, to aſſert her infallibility; yet alas *Tyber* may as well call it ſelf the Ocean, or *Italy* the world, as the Roman Church may name it ſelf the Univerſal; whilſt 'tis ſo apparent that far the leſs part of Chriſtians are under her Communion. And if ſhe be but a particular Church, ſhe has no immunity from errors, nor thoſe under her from having thoſe errors (how pernicious ſoever) impos'd upon them. As to her having actually err'd, and in divers particulars, the proof of that has been the work of ſo many Volumes, that 'twould be impertinent here to undertake it: I ſhall only inſtance in that of Image-worſhip, a practice perfectly irreconcilable with the ſecond Commandment; and doubtleſs clearly diſcern'd by her to be ſo: upon which account it is, that tho by tranſlations and Paraphraſes ſhe wreſts and moulds other Texts to comply with her Doctrines, yet ſhe dares not truſt to thoſe arts for this: but takes a more compendious courſe, and expunges the Commandment; as is evident in her Catechiſms and other Manuals. Now a Church that can thus ſacrilegiouſly purloin one Commandment (and ſuch a one as God has own'd himſelf the moſt zealouſly concern'd in) and to delude her children, ſplit another to make up the

number, may as her needs require, ſubſtract and divide what others ſhe pleaſe: and then whilſt all reſort to Scripture is obſtructed, how fatal a hazard muſt thoſe poor ſouls run, who are oblig'd to follow theſe blind, or rather theſe winking guides into the ditch?

The dangers of allowing the Scripture are no ſufficient excuſe.

10. But all theſe criminations ſhe retorts by objecting the dangers of allowing the Scriptures to the vulgar, which ſhe accuſes as the ſpring of all Sects, Schiſms, and Hereſies. To which I anſwer firſt, that ſuppoſing this were true, 'twas certainly foreſeen by God, who notwithſtanding laid no reſtraint, probably as foreſeeing, that the dangers of implicit Faith (to which ſuch a reſtraint muſt ſubject men) would be far greater: and if God ſaw fit to indulge the liberty, thoſe that ſhall oppoſe it, muſt certainly think they do not only partake, but have tranſplanted infallibility from God to themſelves.

'Tis not true that ſchiſms and hereſies are owing to the reading the Scripture.

11. But ſecondly, 'tis not generally true, that Sects, Schiſms and Hereſies are owing to this liberty: all Eccleſiaſtical ſtory ſhows us, that they were not the illiterate Lay-men, but the learned Clerks, who were uſually the broachers of Hereſies. And indeed many of them were ſo ſubtil and aerial, as could never have been forg'd in groſſer brains; but were founded not on Scripture meerly miſtaken, but rack'd and diſtorted with nice criticiſms, and quirks of Logick, as ſeveral of the ancients complain: ſome again ſprang from that ambition of attaining, or impatience of miſſing Eccleſiaſtical dignities; which appropriates them to the Clergy. So that if the abuſe infers a forfeiture of the uſe, the Learned have of all others, the leaſt title to the Scriptures; and perhaps thoſe who now ingroſs them, the leaſt title of all the Learned.

Church ſtory informs us hereſies roſe from Eccleſiaſticks and men of ſpeculation.

12. On the other ſide, Church ſtory indeed mentions ſome Lay-propugners of Hereſies; but thoſe for the moſt part were either ſo groſs and beſtial, as diſparag'd and confuted themſelves and Authors, and roſe rather from the brutiſh inclination of the men, than from their miſtake of Scripture: or elſe they were by the immediate infuſion of the Devil, who back'd his heretical ſuggeſtions with Sorceries and lying wonders, as in *Simon Magus*, *Menander*, *&c.* And for later times tho ſometimes it happens among the vulgar a few pragmatick Spirits, that love to tamper with the obſcureſt Texts, and will undertake to expound before they underſtand; yet that is not their common temper: the generality are rather in the other extreme, ſtupid and unobſervant even of the plaineſt doctrines. And if to this be objected the multitude of Quakers and Fanaticks, who generally are of the ignorant ſort; I anſwer, that 'tis manifeſt the firſt propugners of thoſe tenets in *Germany*, were not ſeduc'd into them by miſtake of Scripture, but induſtriouſly form'd them, at once to diſguiſe and promote their villainous deſigns of ſedition and rapine: and as for thoſe amongſt us, it is not at all certain that their firſt errors were their own productions: there are vehement preſumptions that the ſeeds were ſown by greater Artificers; whoſe firſt buſineſs was to unhinge them from the Church, and then to fill their heads with ſtrange Chimera's of their privileges and perfections: and by that intoxication of ſpiritual Pride, diſpoſe them for all deluſions: and thereby render them like *Samſon*'s Foxes, fit inſtruments to ſet all in combuſtion.

It no way appears that the reading of Scripture was acceſſary to the riſe or growth of hereſies.

13. But admit this were but a conjecture, and that they were the ſole Authors of their own frenzy; how appears it that the liberty of reading the Scripture was the cauſe of it? Had theſe men been of the Romiſh Communion, and ſo been interdicted private reading, yet ſome broken parts of Scripture would have been in Sermons and Books of devotion communi-

cated to them; had it not been as poſſible for them to have wreſted what they heard as what they read? In one reſpect it ſeems rather more likely: for in thoſe looſe and incidental quotations the connexion is ſometimes not ſo diſcernable; and many Texts there are whoſe ſenſe is ſo interwoven with the context, that without conſulting that, there may be very pernicious miſtakes; on which account it is probably more ſafe that the Auditor ſhould have Bibles to conſult. So that this reſtraint of Scripture is a very fallible expedient of the infallible Church. And indeed themſelves have in event found it ſo; for if it were ſo ſoveraign a prophylactick againſt error, how comes it to paſs that ſo many of their members that were under that diſcipline have revolted from them into that which they call hereſy? If they ſay, the defection was made by ſome of the Learned to whom the Scripture was allow'd; why do they not (according to their way of arguing) take it from them alſo upon that experiment of its miſchief, and confine it only to the infallible chair? but if they own them to have been unlearn'd (as probably the *Albigenſes* and *Waldenſes, &c.* were) they may ſee how inſignificant a guard this reſtraint is againſt error: and learn how little is got by that policy which controles the divine Wiſdom.

14. Nor can they take ſhelter in the example of the primitive Chriſtians: for they in the conſtant uſe of the holy Scriptures yeilded not unto the Jews. Whereas the Jews had the Scriptures read publickly to them every Sabbath day; which *Joſephus* againſt *Appion* thus expreſſes: *Moſes propounded to the Jews the moſt excellent and neceſſary learning of the Law, not by hearing it once or twice, but every ſeventh day laying aſide their works, he commanded them to aſſemble for the hearing of the Law, and throughly and exactly to learn it.* Parallel to this was the practice of the primitive Church, perform'd by the Lector or Reader, of which *Juſtin Martyr* in his 2 *Apol.* gives this account. *On the day called Sunday, all that abide in towns or the countries about, meet in one place, and the writings of the Apoſtles and Prophets are read, ſo far as there is place.* So *Tertullian* in his *Apol.* deſcribing the offices in the publick Aſſemblies: *We feed our faith with the ſacred Words, we raiſe our hopes, and eſtabliſh our alliance.*

The primitive Church did not think fit to withhold the Scripture.

15. And as the Jews thought it indecent for perſons profeſſing piety, to let three days paſs without the offices thereof in the congregation; and therefore met in their Synagogues upon every Tueſday and Thurſday in the week, and there perform'd the duties of faſting, prayer, and hearing the holy Scriptures; concerning which is the boaſt of the Phariſee, *Luke* 18. 12. in conformity hereto the Chriſtians alſo, their Sabbath being brought forward from the Saturday to the day following; that the like number of days might not paſs them without performing the aforeſaid duties in the congregation; met together on the Wedneſdays and Fridays, which were the days of Station, ſo frequently mention'd in *Tertullian* and others, the firſt writers of the Church. *Tertullian* expreſly ſays, that the Chriſtians dedicated to the offices of Piety, *the fourth and ſixth day of the week:* and *Clemens Alex.* ſays of the Chriſtians, that *they underſtood the ſecret reaſons of their weekly faſts, to wit, thoſe of the fourth day of the week, and that of the preparation before the Sabbath; commonly call'd Wedneſday and Friday.* Where by the way, we may take notice what ground there is for the obſervation of the Wedneſday and Friday in our Church, and the Litanies then appointed, ſo much neglected in this profligate Age.

The Jews never ſuffered three days to paſs without the publick reading of the Law, which was imitated by the Chriſtians.

They both privately inſtructed their Children in it.

16. But ſecondly, as the Jews were diligent in the private reading of the Scripture; being taught it from their infancy: which cuſtom St. *Paul* refers to 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. whereof *Joſephus* againſt *Appion* ſays, *That if a man ask any Jew concerning the Laws, he will tell every thing readier than his name: for learning them from the firſt time they have ſenſe of any thing, they retain them imprinted in their minds.* So were the firſt Chriſtians equally induſtrious in improving their knowledge of divine Truth. *The whole life of a Chriſtian*, ſays *Clem. Alex. Strom. l. is a holy ſolemnity, there his ſacrifices are prayers and praiſes; before every meal he has the reading of the holy Scriptures; and Pſalms and Hymns at the time of his meals.* Which *Tertullian* alſo deſcribes in his Apol. and St. *Cyprian* in the end of the Epiſt. to *Donatus*.

A proof hereof are the early and numerous verſions of the Scripture.

17. And this is farther evidenc'd by the early and numerous verſions of the Scriptures into all vulgar Languages; concerning which *Theodoret* ſpeaks in his book of the Cure of the affections of the Greeks, Serm. 5. *We Chriſtians* (ſays he) *are enabled to ſhew the power of Apoſtolick and Prophetick doctrines, which have fill'd all Countries under Heaven. For that which was formerly utter'd in Hebrew, is not only tranſlated into the Language of the Grecians, but alſo the Romans, Egyptians, Perſians, Indians, Armenians, Scythians, Samaritans, and in a word into all the Languages that are us'd by any Nation.* The ſame is ſaid by Saint *Chryſoſtom* in his firſt Homily upon Saint *John*.

Which was done by the doctors of the Church.

18. Nor was this done by the blind zeal of inconſiderable men, but the moſt eminent Doctors of the Church were concern'd herein: ſuch as *Origen*, who with infinite labour contriv'd the Hexapla. St. *Chryſoſtom*, who tranſlated the New Teſtament, Pſalms, and ſome part of the Old Teſtament into the Armenian Tongue, as witneſſes *Geor. Alex.* in the life of *Chryſoſt.* So *Ulphilas* the firſt Biſhop of the Goths tranſlated the holy Scripture into the Gothick; as *Socrat. Eccl. Hiſt. l.* 4. *cap.* 33. and others teſtify. Saint *Jerom*, who tranſlated them not only into Latin from the Hebrew, the Old Italick verſion having been from the Greek; but alſo into his native vulgar Dalmatick: which he ſays himſelf in his Epiſtle to *Sophronius*.

The peoples having the ſcripture for their private uſe, appears from the heathens extorting of them by perſecution.

19. But the peoples having them for their private and conſtant uſe, appears farther by the Heathens making the extorting of them a part of their perſecution: and when divers did faint in that trial, and baſely ſurrender'd them, we find the Church level'd her ſeverity only againſt the offending perſons, did not (according to the Romiſh equity) puniſh the innocent, by depriving them of that ſacred Book, becauſe the others had ſo unworthily proſtituted it (tho the prevention of ſuch a profanation for the future had been as fair a plea for it as the Romaniſts do now make:) but on the contrary the primitive Fathers are frequent, nay indeed importunate in their exhortations to the private ſtudy of holy Scripture, which they recommend to Chriſtians of all Ranks, Ages, and Sexes.

The ſuffrage of Clem. Alex.

20. As an inſtance hereof let us hear *Clemens* of *Alexand.* in his Exhort. *The Word*, ſays he, *is not hid from any, it is a common light that ſhineth to all men; there is no obſcurity in it; hear it you that be far off, and hear it you that are nigh.*

Of St. Jerom.

21. To this purpoſe St. *Jerom* ſpeaks in his Epiſtle to *Leta*, whom he directs in the education of her young daughter, and adviſes, *that inſtead of gems and ſilk, ſhe be enamour'd with the holy Scripture; wherein not gold, or skins, or Babylonian embroideries, but a correct and beautiful variety producing faith, will recommend its ſelf. Let her firſt learn the Pſalter, and be entertain'd with thoſe ſongs; then be inſtructed unto life by the Proverbs of* Solomon: *let her learn from* Eccleſiaſtes *to deſpiſe worldly things; tranſcribe from* Job *the practice of patience and virtue: let her paſs then to the Goſpels, and never let them*

them be out of her hands: and then imbibe with all the faculties of the mind, the Acts of the Apoſtles, and the Epiſtles. When ſhe has enrich'd the ſtore-houſe of her breaſt with theſe treaſures, let her learn the Prophets, the Heptateuch, or books of Moſes, Joſhua *and* Judges, *the books of* Kings, *and* Chronicles, *the Volumes of* Ezra *and* Eſther; and laſtly the *Canticles.* And indeed this Father is ſo concern'd to have the unletter'd female ſex ſkilfull in the Scriptures, that tho' he ſharply rebukes their pride and over-weening; he not only frequently reſolves their doubts concerning difficult places in the ſaid Scriptures, but dedicates ſeveral of his Commentaries to them.

Of St. Auſtin.

22. The ſame is to be ſaid of St. *Auſtin*, who in his Epiſtles to unletter'd Laicks, encourages their enquiries concerning the Scripture, aſſuring *Voluſianus* Ep. 3. *that it ſpeaks thoſe things that are plain to the heart of the learned and unlearned, as a familiar friend; in the myſterious, mounts not up into high phraſes which might deter a ſlow and unlearned mind, (as the poor are in their addreſſes to the rich;) but invites all with lowly ſpeech, feeding with manifeſt truth, and exerciſing with ſecret.* And Ep. 1. 21. tells the devout *Proba, that in this world, where we are abſent from the Lord, and walk by faith and not by ſight, the ſoul is to think it ſelf deſolate, and never ceaſe from prayer, and the words of divine and holy Scripture,* &c.

Of St. Chryſoſtom.

23. Saint *Chryſoſtom* in his third Homily of *Lazarus* thus addreſſes him ſelf to *married perſons, houſholders, and people engag'd in trades and ſecular profeſſions*; telling them, *that the reading of the Scripture is a great defenſative againſt ſin; and on the other ſide, the ignorancee thereof is a deep and headlong precipice; that not to know the Law of God, is the utter loſs of ſalvation; that this has caus'd hereſies, and corruption of life, and has confounded the order of things: for it cannot be by any means, that his labour ſhould be fruitleſs, who employs himſelf in a daily attentive reading of the Scripture.*

Farther teſtimonies from St. Chryſt.

24. *I am not*, ſays the ſame St. *Chryſoſt.* Hom 9. on *Coloſ.* 3. *a Monk, I have wife and children, and the cares of a family. But 'tis a deſtructive opinion that the reading of the Scripture pertains only to thoſe who have addicted themſelves to a monaſtick life; when the reading of Scripture is much more neceſſary for ſecular perſons: for they who converſe abroad and receive frequent wounds, are in greateſt need of remedies and preſervatives.* So Hom. 2. on *Mat. Hearken all you that are ſecular, how you ought to order your wives and children; and how you are particularly enjoyn'd to read the Scriptures, and that not perfunctorily or by chance, but very diligently.*

Farther teſtimonies from St. Chryſt.

25. Likewiſe Hom. 3. on *Laz. What ſaiſt thou, O man? it is not thy buſineſs to turn over the Scripture, being diſtracted by innumerable cares: no, thou haſt therefore the greater obligation: others do not ſo much ſtand in need of the Scripture, as they who are converſant in much buſineſs.* Farther Hom. 8. on *Heb.* 5. *I beſeech you neglect not the reading of the Scriptures; but whether we comprehend the meaning of what is ſpoken or not, let us always be converſant in them: for daily meditation ſtrengthens the memory; and it frequently happens, that what you now cannot find out, if you attempt it again, you will the next day diſcover: for God of his goodneſs will enlighten the mind.* It were endleſs to tranſcribe all the Exhortations of the ancient Doctors and Fathers of the Church; they not only permitted, but earneſtly preſt upon all Chriſtians, whatever their eſtate or condition were, the conſtant reading of the holy Scripture. Nor indeed was their reſtraint ever heard of till the Church of *Rome* had eſpous'd ſuch doctrines as would not bear the teſt of Scripture: and then as thoſe who deal in falſe wares are us'd to do, they found it neceſſary to proportion their lights accordingly.

The confeſſion of Pet. Sutor.

26. This *Peter Sutor* in his ſecond Book chap. 22. of the Tranſlation of the Scripture honeſtly confeſſes, ſaying, *That whereas many things are enjoyn'd which are not expreſly in Scripture, the unlearned obſerving this, will be apt to murmur and complain that ſo many burthens are laid upon them, and their Chriſtian liberty infring'd. They will eaſily be withdrawn from obſerving the Conſtitutions of the Church, when they find that they are not contain'd in the Law of Chriſt.* And that this was not a frivolous ſuggeſtion, the deſperate attempt of the Romaniſts above mention'd, in leaving out the ſecond Commandment in their Primers and Catechiſms which they communicate to the people, may paſs for an irrefragable evidence; for what Lay-man would not be ſhockt, to find Almighty God command, *not to make any graven image, nor the likeneſs of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; that no one ſhould bow down to them, nor worſhip them*: when he ſees the contrary is practic'd and commanded by the Church?

The negligent who detain the Scripture from themſelves are as criminal, as they who force them from their people.

27. But would God none but the Romaniſt were impeachable of this detention of Scripture: there are too many among us that are thus falſe and envious to themſelves: and what the former do upon policy and pretence of reverence, thoſe do upon mere oſcitancy and avow'd profaneneſs; which are much worſe inducements. And for ſuch as theſe to declaim againſt detention of the Scripture, is like the Law-ſuits of thoſe who contend only about ſuch little punctilio's as themſelves deſign no advantage from, but only worſting their Adverſaries: and it would be much ſafer for them to lie under the interdict of others, than thus to reſtrian themſelves: even as much as the errors of obedience are more excuſable than thoſe of contempt and profaneneſs.

Such are Dioclesians *to themſelves.*

28. And here I would have it ſeriouſly conſider'd that the Edict of *Diocleſian* for the demoliſhing the Chriſtian Churches and the burning their Bibles, became the character and particular aggravation of his moſt bloody perſecution. Now ſhould Almighty God call us to the like trial, ſhould Antichriſtian violence, whether heathen or other, take from us our Churches and our Bibles; what comfort could we have in that calamity; if our contempt of thoſe bleſſings drove them from us; nay, prevented perſecution, and bereft us of them even whilſt we had them in our power? He who neglects to make his conſtant reſort unto the Church, which by Gods mercy now ſtands open; or to read diligently the holy Scriptures, which by the ſame Divine Goodneſs are free for him to uſe, is his own *Diocleſian*; and without the terrors of death or torments, has renounc'd, if not the Faith, the great inſtruments of its conveyance, and pledge of God Almighties preſence among the ſons of men.

Whether we will hear or forbear, we ſhall be judg'd by the Scripture.

29. But what if men either upon the one motive or the other, will not read; yet the Scriptures continue ſtill moſt worthy to be read: they retain ſtill their propriety for all thoſe excellent ends to which God deſign'd them: and as the Prophet tells the Jews, Ezek. 2. 5. *whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, they ſhall know there has been a prophet among them*; ſo whether we will take the benefit or no, we ſhall one day find that the holy Scriptures would have made us *wiſe unto Salvation.* If through our fault alone they fail to do ſo, they will one day aſſume a leſs grateful office; and from guides and aſſiſtants, become accuſers and witneſſes againſt us.

SECT. V.

The Scripture has great propriety and fitneſs towards the attainment of its excellent end.

The aptitude of the Scripture to attain its end.

1. WE are now in the next place to conſider how exactly the holy Scriptures are adapted to thoſe great ends to which they are directed: how ſufficient they are for that important negotiation on which they are ſent: and that we ſhall certainly find them, if we look on them either intrinſecally, or circumſtantially. For the firſt of theſe notions we need only to reflect on the third Part of this diſcourſe, where the Scripture in reſpect of the ſubject matter is evinc'd to be a Syſtem of the moſt excellent Laws, backt with the moſt tranſcendent rewards and puniſhments; and the certainty of thoſe confirm'd by ſuch pregnant inſtances of Gods mercies and vengeance in this world, as are the ſureſt gages and earneſts of what we are bid to expect in another.

It cloſes with our intereſts and paſſions.

2. Now what method imaginable can there be us'd to rational creatures of more force and energy? Nay it ſeems to deſcend even to our paſſions and accommodates it ſelf to our ſeveral inclinations. And ſeeing how few Proſelytes there are to bare and naked vertue, and how many to intereſt and advantage; God cloſes with them upon their own terms, and does not ſo much enjoyn as buy thoſe little ſervices he asks from us.

And only affrights when we will not be allur'd.

3. But becauſe ſome mens natures are ſo diſingenous as to hate to be oblig'd no leſs than to be reform'd, the Scripture has goads and ſcourges to drive ſuch beaſts as will not be led; terrors and threatnings, and thoſe of moſt formidable ſort to affright thoſe who will not be allur'd. Nay leſt incredulous men ſhould queſtion the reality of future rewards or puniſhments, the Scripture gives as ſenſible evidence of them as we are capable of receiving in this world; by regiſtring ſuch ſignal protections and judgments proportion'd to vertue and vice, as ſufficiently atteſt the Pſalmiſts Axiom: *Doubtleſs there is a God that judgeth the earth*, Pſal. 58. 11. and leaves nothing to the impenitent ſinner, but a *fearful expectation of that fiery indignation* threatned hereafter, *Heb.* 10. 27.

So juſtifies our Saviour's deſcription of being a net, that caught of every ſort.

4. And now methinks the Scripture ſeems to be that *net* our Saviour ſpeaks of, *that caught of every ſort*, Matt. 13. 47. it is of ſo vaſt a compaſs that it muſt, one would think, fetch in all kind of tempers: and ſure had we not mixt natures with fiends, contracted ſome of their malice and obſtinacy, mere human pravity could not hold out.

The authority wherewith the Scripture ſpeaks gives great advantage to the attaining its end.

5. And as the holy Scripture is thus fitly proportion'd to its end in reſpect of the ſubject matter, ſo it is alſo in reference to its circumſtances, which all conſpire to render it *the power of God unto ſalvation*, Rom. 1. 16. In the firſt rank of thoſe we muſt place its Divine original, which ſtamps it with an uncontrolable authority; and is an infallible ſecurity that the matter of it is perfectly true: ſince it proceeds from that eſſential verity which cannot abuſe us with fraudulent promiſes or threatnings: and from that infinite power that cannot be impeded in the execution of what he purpoſes.

Which is ſufficiently declar'd and promulgated.

6. Yet to render this circumſtance efficacious there needs another; to wit, that its being the Word of God be ſufficiently teſtify'd to us: and we have in the foregoing Diſcourſe evinc'd it to be ſo; and that in the utmoſt degree that a matter of that kind is capable of, beyond which no ſober

man will require evidence in any thing. And certainly theſe two circumſtances thus united, have a mighty force to impreſs the dictates of Scripture on us. And we muſt rebel againſt God and our own convictions too to hold out againſt it.

It gives a hiſtory of all created beings from their firſt original.

7. A third circumſtance relates to the frame and compoſure of this Divine Book, both as to method, and ſtile: concerning which I have already made ſome reflections. But now that I may ſpeak more diſtinctly, I obſerve it takes its riſe from the firſt point of time wherein 'twas poſſible for mankind to be concern'd; and gradually proceeds to its fall and renovation: ſhews us firſt our need of a Redeemer, and then points us out who it is by Types and promiſes in the Old Teſtament, and by way of hiſtory and completion in the New. In the former it acquaints us with that pedagogy ot the Law which God deſign'd as our *School-maſter to bring us to Chriſt*, Gal. 3. 25. and in the Goſpel ſhews us yet a more excellent way; preſents us with thoſe more ſublime elevated doctrines, which Chriſt came down from heaven to reveal.

The ſtile is frequently full of majeſty.

8. As for the ſtile, that is full of grateful variety, ſometimes high and majeſtick, as becomes that *high and holy one that inhabiteth eternity*, Iſaiah 75. 15. and ſometimes ſo humble and after the manner of men, as agrees to the other part of his character, *his dwelling is with him that is of an humble ſpirit*, Iſa. 75. 15. I know profane wits are apt to brand this as an unevenneſs of ſtile: but they may as well accuſe the various notes of Muſick as deſtructive to Harmony, or blame an Orator being able to tune his tongue to the moſt different ſtrains.

Suited to its ſubject; is plain in duty and involv'd in myſteries.

9. Another excellency of the ſtile, is its propriety to the ſeveral ſubjects it treats of. When it ſpeaks of ſuch things as God would not have men pry into, it wraps them up in clouds and thick darkneſs; by that means to deterr inquiſitive man (as he did at *Sinai*) from breaking into the mount, *Exod.* 20. And that he gives any intimation at all of ſuch, ſeems deſign'd only to give us a juſt eſtimate how ſhallow our apprehenſions are; and excite us to adore and admire that Abyſs of Divine Wiſdom which we can never fathom.

Things of a middle nature, are made the prize of induſtry.

10. Things of a middle nature, which may be uſeful to ſome, but are not indiſpenſably neceſſary to all, the Scripture leaves more acceſſible, yet not ſo obvious as to be within every mans reach: but makes them only the prize of induſtry, prayer, and humble endeavours. And it is no ſmall benefit that thoſe who covet the knowledge of Divine Truth, are by it engag'd to take theſe vertues in the way. Beſides there is ſo much time requir'd to that ſtudy, as renders it inconſiſtent with thoſe ſecular buſineſſes wherein the generality of men are immerſt: and conſequently 'tis neceſſary that thoſe who addict themſelves to the one, have competent vacancy from the other: And in this it has a viſible uſe by being very contributive to the maintaining that ſpiritual ſubordination of the people to the Paſtors, which God has eſtabliſh'd. *Miriam* and *Corah*'s Partiſans are a pregnant inſtance how much the opinion of equal knowledge unfits for ſubjection: and we ſee by ſad experience how much the bare pretence of it has diſturb'd the Church, and made thoſe turn preachers who never were underſtanding hearers.

Difficult places are interpreted by plainer.

11. But beſides theſe more abſtruſe, there are eaſier truths in which every man is concern'd; the explicit knowledge whereof is neceſſary to all: I mean the Divine rules for ſaving Faith and Manners. And in thoſe the Scripture ſtile is as plain as is poſſible: condeſcends to the apprehenſions of the rudeſt capacities: ſo that none that can read the Scripture but will

there find the way to bliſs evidently chalk'd out to him. That I may uſe the words of Saint *Gregory*, *the Lamb may wade in thoſe waters of life, as well as the Elephant may ſwim. The Holy Ghoſt*, as Saint *Auſtin* tells us, Lib. 2. of Chriſtian doctrine, chap. 6. *has made in the plainer place of Scripture magnificent and healthful proviſion for our hunger; and in the obſcure, againſt ſatiety. For there are ſcarce any things drawn from obſcure places, which in others are not ſpoken moſt plainly.* And he farther adds, *that if any thing happen to be no where explain'd, every man may there abound in his own ſenſe.*

12. So again in the ſame book, chap. 2. he ſays, *that all thoſe things which concern Faith and Manners, are plainly to be met with in the Scripture*: and Saint *Jerom* in his Comment on *Iſ.* 19. tells us, *that 'tis the cuſtom of the Scripture to cloſe obſcure ſayings with thoſe that are eaſy; and what was firſt expreſt darkly, to propoſe in evident words*! which very thing is ſaid likewiſe by Saint *Chryſoſtom*, *Hom.* 9. on 2 *Cor.* 4.11. who in his firſt Homily on Saint *Matt.* farther declares, *that the Scriptures are eaſy to be underſtood, and expos'd to vulgar capacities.*

St. Auſtin and St Jerom and St Chryſoſtom atteſt the eaſineſs of theScripture.

13. He ſays again, *Hom.* upon *Iſaiah*, *that the Scriptures are not metals that require the help of Miners, but afford a treaſure eaſily to be had to them that ſeek the riches contain'd in them. It is enough only to ſtoop down, and look upon them, and depart repleniſh'd with wealth; it is enough only to open them, and behold the ſplendor of thoſe Gems.* Again, *Hom.* 3. on the ſecond Ep. to the *Theſſ.* 2. *All things are evident and ſtraight, which are in the holy Scripture, whatever is neceſſary is manifeſt.* So alſo *Hom.* 3. on *Gen.* 14. *It cannot be that he who is ſtudious in the holy Scripture ſhould be rejected: for though the inſtruction of men be wanting, the Lord from above will inlighten our minds, ſhine in upon our reaſon, reveal what is ſecret, and teach what we do not know.* So *Hom.* 1. on *John* 11. *Almighty God involves his doctrine with no miſts and darkneſs, as did the Philoſophers: his doctrine is brighter than the San-beams, and more illuſtrious; and therefore every where diffus'd.* And *Hom.* 6. on *John* 11. *His doctrine is ſo facile, that not only the wiſe, but even women, and youths muſt comprehend it. Hom.* 13. on *Gen.* 2. *Let us go to the Scripture as our Mark, which is its own interpreter.* And ſoon after he ſays, that *the Scripture interprets it ſelf, and ſuffers not its Auditor to err.* To the ſame purpoſe ſays *Cyril* in his third Book againſt *Julian. In the Scripture nothing is difficult to them, who are converſant in them as they ought to be.*

Eſpecially in things neceſſary.

14. It is therefore a groundleſs cavil which men make at the obſcurity of the Scripture; ſince it is not obſcure in thoſe things wherein 'tis our common intereſt it ſhould be plain: which ſufficiently juſtifies its propriety to that great end of *making us wiſe unto ſalvation.* And for thoſe things which ſeem leſs intelligible to us, many of them become ſo, not by the innate obſcurity of the Text, but by extrinſick circumſtances (of which perhaps the over-buſy tampering of Paraphraſts, pleaſed with new notions of their own, may be reckon'd for one.) But this ſubject the Reader may find ſo well propoſed in Mr. *Boyl's* Tract concerning the ſtile of Scripture, that I ſhall be kindeſt both to him and it to refer him thither; as alſo for anſwer to thoſe other querulous objections which men galled with the ſenſe of the Scripture, have made to its ſtile.

'Tis a groundleſs cavil that men make to the obſcurity of Scripture, ſince whatever is difficult is not neceſſary.

15. A third circumſtance in which the Scripture is fitted to attain its end, is its being committed to Writing, as that is diſtinguiſh'd from Oral delivery. It is moſt true, the word of God is of equal authority and efficacy which way ſo ever it be deliver'd. The Sermons of the Apoſtles were every jot as Divine and powerful out of their mouths, as they are now in their

A farther advantage for the attainment of the end deſign'd in the ſcripture is its being committed to writing.

their ſtory. All the advantage thereof that the written word can pretend to, is in order to its perpetuity, as it is a ſecurer way of derivation to poſterity, than that of oral Tradition. To evince that it is ſo, I ſhall firſt weigh the rational probabilities on either ſide. Secondly, I ſhall conſider to which God himſelf appears in Scripture to give the deference.

Eſpecially being univerſally diſperſt.

16. For the firſt of theſe, I ſhall propoſe this conſideration, which I had occaſion to intimate before, that the Bible being writ for the univerſal uſe of the faithful, 'twas as univerſally diſperſt amongſt them: The Jews had the Law not only in their Synagogues, but in their private houſes, and as ſoon as the Evangelical Books were writ, they were ſcatter'd into all places where the Chriſtian Faith had obtain'd. Now when there was ſuch a vaſt multitude of copies, and thoſe ſo revered by the poſſeſſors, that they thought it the higheſt pitch of ſacrilege to expoſe them, it muſt ſurely be next to impoſſible, entirely to ſuppreſs that Book. Beſides, it could never be attempted but by ſome eminent violence, as it was by the heathen Perſecutors; which (according to the common effect of oppoſition) ſerv'd to enhance the Chriſtians value of the Bible; and conſequently when the ſtorm was paſt, to excite their diligence for recruiting the number. So that, unleſs in after Ages, all the Chriſtians in the world ſhould at once make a voluntary defection, and conſpire to eradicate their Religion, the Scriptures could not be utterly extinguiſh'd.

Whereby as it was ſecur'd from a total ſuppreſſion, ſo alſo from falſification.

17. And that which ſecures it from total ſuppreſſion, do's in a great degree do ſo from corruption and falſification. For whilſt ſo many genuine copies are extant in all parts of the world, to be appeal'd to, it would be a very difficult matter to impoſe a ſpurious one; eſpecially if the change were ſo material as to awaken mens jealouſies. And it muſt be only in a place and age of groſs ignorance, that they can be daring enough to attempt it. And if it ſhould happen to ſucceed in ſuch a particular Church; yet what is that to the univerſal? And to think to have the forgery admitted there, is (as a learned man ſays) like attempting to poiſon the ſea.

Tradition is much more liable to hazards.

18. On the other ſide, oral Tradition ſeems more liable to hazards; error may there inſinuate it ſelf much more inſenſibly. And tho' there be no univerſal conſpiracy to admit it at firſt: yet like a ſmall eruption of waters, it widens its own paſſage, till it cauſes an inundation. There is no impreſſion ſo deep, but time and intervening accidents may wear out of mens minds; eſpecially where the notions are many and are founded not in nature, but poſitive inſtitution, as a great part of Chriſtian Religion is. And when we conſider the various tempers of men, 'twill not be ſtrange that ſucceeding Ages will not always be determin'd by the Traditions of the former. Some are pragmatick, and think themſelves fitter to preſcribe to the belief of their poſterity, than to follow that of their Anceſtors: ſome have intereſts and deſigns which will be better ſerv'd by new Tenets: and ſome are ignorant and miſtaking, and may unawares corrupt the doctrine they ſhould barely deliver: and of this laſt ſort we may gueſs there may be many, ſince it falls commonly to the mothers lot to imbue children with the firſt rudiments.

We daily ſee how a true and probable ſtory after a little telling improves into an improbable lie.

19. Now in all theſe caſes how poſſible is it that primitive Tradition may be either loſt or adulterated? and conſequently, and in proportion to that poſſibility, our confidence of it muſt be ſtagger'd. I am ſure according to the common eſtimate in ſeculars it muſt be ſo. For I appeal to any man whether he be not apter to credit a relation which comes from an eye-witneſs than at the third or fourth, much more at the hundredth rebound: (as in this caſe.) And daily experience tells us; that a true and

probable ſtory by paſſing thro many hands, often grows to an improbable lye. This man thinks he could add one becoming circumſtance, that man another: and whilſt moſt men take the liberty to do ſo, the relation grows as monſtrous as ſuch a heap of incoherent fancies can make it.

The weighty concern of religion cannot remedy this.

20. If to this it be ſaid, that this happens only in trivial ſecular matters, but in the weighty concerns of Religion mankind is certainly more ſerious and ſincere. I anſwer that it is very improbable, ſince 'tis obvious in the common practice of the world, that the intereſts of Religion are poſtpon'd to every little worldly concern. And therefore when a temporal advantage requires the bending and warping of Religion, there never be wanting ſome that will attempt it.

We are naturally enclin'd to will-worſhip.

21. Beſides, there is ſtill left in human nature ſo much of the venom of the Serpents firſt temptation, that tho' men cannot be as God, yet they love to be preſcribing to him, and to be their own Aſſeſſors as to that worſhip and homage they are to pay him.

And the devil is concern'd to help this temper forward and corrupt religion.

22. But above all 'tis conſiderable that in this caſe Satan has a more peculiar concern, and can ſerve himſelf more by a falſification here than in temporal affairs. For if he can but corrupt Religion, it ceaſes to be his enemy, and becomes one of his moſt uſeful engins, as ſufficiently appear'd in the rights of the heathen worſhip. We have therefore no cauſe to think this an exempt caſe: but to preſume it may be influenc'd by the ſame pravity of human nature, which prevails in others; and conſequently are oblig'd to bleſs God that he has not left our ſpiritual concerns to ſuch hazards, but has lodg'd them in a more ſecure repoſitory, the written word.

It may be objected, that by decrying Tradition we invalidate the authority of the Scripture.

23. But I foreſee 'twill be objected, that whilſt I thus diſparage Tradition, I do vertually invalidate the Scripture it ſelf, which comes to us upon its credit. To this I anſwer, that ſince God has withdrawn immediate revelation from the world, Tradition is the only means to convey to us the firſt notice that this Book is the word of God: and it being the only means he affords, we have all reaſon to depend on his goodneſs, that he will not ſuffer that to be evacuated to us: and that how liable ſoever Tradition may be to err, yet that ſhall not actually err in this particular.

The Tradition which concerns the author or credit of a book is a ſhort propoſition which is not apt to be corrupted.

24. But in the ſecond place; This Tradition ſeems not ſo liable to falſification as others: It is ſo very ſhort and ſimple a propoſition; ſuch and ſuch writings are the word of God, that there is no great room for ſophiſtry or miſtake to pervert the ſenſe; the only poſſible deception muſt be to change the ſubject, and obtrude ſuppoſititious writings in room of the true, under the title of the word of God. But this has already appear'd to be unpracticable, becauſe of the multitude of copies which were diſperſt in the world; by which ſuch an attempt would ſoon have bin detected. There appears therefore more reaſon as well as more neceſſity, to rely upon Tradition in this, than in moſt other particulars.

The judgement of mankind gives the preference to writing againſt Tradition. Our laws and Evidences of our Eſtates, we do not truſt to memory.

25. Neither yet do I ſo far decry oral Tradition in any, as to conclude it impoſſible it ſhould derive any truth to poſterity; I only look on it as more caſual; and conſequently a leſs fit conveyance of the moſt important and neceſſary verities than the written word: In which I conceive my ſelf juſtify'd by the common ſenſe of mankind; who uſe to commit thoſe things to writing, which they are moſt ſolicitous to derive to poſterity. Do's any Nation truſt their fundamental Laws only to the memory of the preſent Age, and take no other courſe to tranſmit them to the future? do's any man purchaſe an eſtate, and leave no way for his children to lay claim to it, but the Tradition the preſent witneſſes ſhall leave of it? Nay

do's any conſidering man ordinarily make any important pact or bargain (tho' without relation to poſterity) without putting the Articles in writing? And whence is all this caution but from an univerſal conſent that writing is the ſureſt way of tranſmitting?

But herein have the ſuffrage of God himſelf.

26. But we have yet a higher appeal in this matter than to the ſuffrage of men: God himſelf ſeems to have determin'd it; And what his deciſion is, 'tis our next buſineſs to enquire.

He having choſen it.

27. And firſt he has given the moſt real and comprehenſive atteſtation to this way of writting, by having himſelf choſen it. For he is too wiſe to be miſtaken in his eſtimate of better and worſe, and too kind to chuſe the worſt for us: and yet he has choſen to communicate himſelf to the latter Ages of the world by writing; and has ſumm'd up all the Eternal concerns of mankind in the ſacred Scriptures, and left thoſe ſacred Records by which we are to be both inform'd and govern'd; which if oral Tradition would infallibly have done, had bin utterly needleſs: and God ſure is not ſo prodigal of his Spirit, as to inſpire the Authors of Scripture to write that, whoſe uſe was superſeded by a former more certain expedient.

Himſelf wrote the Decalogue.

28. Nay, under the Moſaic œconomy, when he made uſe of other ways of revealing himſelf, yet to perpetuate the memory even of thoſe Revelations, he choſe to have them written. At the delivery of the Law, God ſpake then *viva voce*, and with that pomp of dreadful ſolemnity, as certainly was apt to make the deepeſt impreſſions; yet God foreſaw that thro' every ſucceeding Age that ſtamp would grow more dim, and in a long revolution might at laſt be extinct. And therefore how warm ſoever the Iſraelites apprehenſions then were, he would not truſt to them for the perpetuating his Law, but committed it to writing, *Exod.* 31. 18. nay wrote it twice himſelf.

Even the ceremonial Law, which was to be in daily practice was written by Moſes. *And the reſtitutions of Religion in that nation, were by the book of the Law found and read; not by dormant Tradition.*

29. Yet farther even the ceremonial Law, tho not intended to be of perpetual obligation, was not yet referr'd to the traditionary way, but was wrote by *Moſes*, and depoſited with the Prieſts, *Deut.* 31. 9. And after-event ſhew'd this was no needleſs caution. For when under *Manaſſes*, Idolatry had prevail'd in *Jeruſalem*, it was not by any dormant Tradition, but by the Book of the Law found in the Temple, that *Joſiah* was both excited to reform Religion, and inſtructed how to do it, 2 *Kings* 22. 10. And had not that or ſome other copy bin produc'd, they had bin much in the dark as to the particulars of their reformation; which that they had not bin convey'd by Tradition, appears by the ſudden ſtartling of the King upon the reading of the Law; which could not have bin, had he bin before poſſeſt with the contents of it. In like manner we find in *Nehemiah*, that the obſervation of the Feaſt of Tabernacles was recover'd by conſulting the Law; the Tradition whereof was wholly worn out; or elſe it had ſure bin impoſſible that it could for ſo long a time have bin intermitted, *Neh.* 8. 18. And yet mens memories are commonly more retentive of an external viſible Rite, than they are of ſpeculative Propoſitions or moral Precepts.

Hither God directs all appeals, to the Law and to the Teſtimony.

30. Theſe inſtances ſhew how fallible an expedient mere oral Tradition is for tranſmiſſion to poſterity. But admit no ſuch inſtance could be given, 'tis argument enough that God has by his own choice of writing, given the preference to it. Nor has he barely choſen it, but has made it the ſtandard by which to meaſure all ſucceeding pretences. 'Tis the means he preſcribes for diſtinguiſhing Divine from diabolical Inſpirations: *To the Law and to the Teſtimony: if they ſpeak not according to this Word, there is no light in them,* Iſa. 8. 20. And when the Lawyer interrogated our Saviour

vior what ſhould we do to inherit eternal life, he ſends him not to ranſack Tradition, or the cabaliſtical Divinity of the Rabbins, but refers him to the Law: *What is written in the Law? How readeſt thou?* Luk. 10.26. And indeed, thro'out the Goſpel, we ſtill find him in his diſcourſe appealing to Scripture, and aſſerting its authority: as on the other ſide inveighing againſt thoſe Traditions of the Elders which had evacuated the written Word: *Ye make the Word of God of none effect by your Tradition,* Mat. 15. 6. Which as it abundantly ſhews Chriſt's adherence to the written Word, ſo 'tis a pregnant inſtance how poſſible it is for Tradition to be corrupted, and made the inſtrument of impoſing mens fancies even in contradiction to God's commands.

And our Lord *ſhews that Tradition did evacuate and not preſerve the Law.*

31. And ſince our bleſſed Lord has made Scripture the teſt whereby to try Traditions, we may ſurely acquieſce in his deciſion, and either embrace or reject Traditions, according as they correſpond to the ſupreme rule, the written Word. It muſt therefore be a very unwarrantable attempt to ſet up Tradition in competition with (much more in contradiction to) that to which Chriſt himſelf hath ſubjected it.

Saint Paul *reckons it as a peculiar privilege of the Jewiſh Church, that the Oracles of God were committed to them.*

32. St. *Paul* reckons it as the principal privilege of the Jewiſh Church, that it had the Oracles of God committed to it, *i. e.* that the holy Scriptures were depoſited, and put in its cuſtody: and in this the Chriſtian Church ſucceeds it, and is the guardian and conſervator of holy Writ. I ask then, had the Jewiſh Church by vertue of its being keeper, a power to ſuperſede any part of thoſe Oracles intruſted to them? If ſo, St. *Paul* was much out in his eſtimate, and ought to have reckon'd that as their higheſt privilege. But indeed, the very nature of the truſt implies the contrary; and beſides, 'tis evident, that is the very crime Chriſt charges upon the Jews in the place above cited. And if the Jewiſh Church had no ſuch right, upon what account can the Chriſtian claim any? Has Chriſt enlarg'd its Charter? Has he left the ſacred Scripture with her, not to preſerve and practiſe, but to regulate and reform? To fill up its vacancies, and ſupply its defects by her own Traditions? If ſo, let the commiſſion be produc'd; but if her office be only that of guardianſhip and truſt, ſhe muſt neither ſubſtract from, nor by any ſupperadditions of her own evacuate its meaning and efficacy: and to do ſo, would be the ſame guilt that it would be in a perſon intruſted with the fundamental Records of a Nation, to foiſt in ſuch clauſes as himſelf pleaſes.

The power of the Church is to keep and explain, not evacuate the written Word.

33. In ſhort, God has in the Scriptures laid down exact rules for our belief and practice, and has entruſted the Church to convey them to us: if ſhe vary, or any way enervate them, ſhe is falſe to that truſt, but cannot by it oblige us to recede from that rule ſhe ſhould deliver, to comply with that ſhe obtrudes upon us. The caſe may be illuſtrated by an eaſy reſemblance. Suppoſe a King hath a foreign Principality for which he compoſes a body of Laws; annexes to them rewards and penalties, and requires an exact and indiſpenſable conformity to them. Thoſe being put in writting, he ſends by a ſelect meſſenger: now ſuppoſe this meſſenger deliver them, yet ſays withal, that himſelf has authority from the King to ſuperſede theſe Laws at his pleaſure; ſo that their laſt reſort muſt be to his dictates, yet produces no other teſtimony but his own bare affirmation; is it poſſible that any men in their wits ſhould be ſo ſtupidly credulous, as to incur the penalty of thoſe Laws upon ſo improbable an indemnity? And ſure it would be no whit leſs madneſs in Chriſtians, to violate any precept of God, on an ungrounded ſuppoſal of the Churches power to diſpenſe with them.

If the univerſal Church hath not power over the written Word, much leſs has a particular Church.

34. And if the Church univerſal hath not this power, nor indeed ever claim'd it, it muſt be a ſtrange inſolence for any particular Church to

pretend to it, as the Church of *Rome* do's: as if we ſhould owe to her Tradition all our Scripture, all our Faith; inſomuch that without the ſupplies which ſhe affords from the Grace of her Chair, our Religion were imperfect, and our ſalvation inſecure. Upon which wild dictates I ſhall take liberty in a diſtinct Section, farther to animadvert.

SECT. VI.

The Suffrage of the primitive Chriſtian Church concerning the propriety and fitneſs which the Scripture has towards the attainment of its excellent end.

The Scripture is ſufficient to attain its end without the ſupplement of Tradition.

1. AGainſt what has been hitherto ſaid to the advantage of the Holy Scripture, there oppoſes it ſelf (as we have already intimated (the Authority of the Church of *Rome*; which allows it to be only an imperfect rule of Faith, ſaying in the fourth Seſſion of the Council of *Trent*, that *Chriſtian faith and diſcipline, are contain'd in the Books written, and unwritten Tradition.* And in the forth rule of the Index put forth by command of the ſaid Council, *the Scripture is* declar'd to be *ſo far from uſeful, that its reading is pernicious, if permitted promiſcuouſly in the vulgar Tongue*, and therefore to be with-held: inſomuch that the ſtudy of the holy Bible is commonly by perſons of the *Roman* Communion, imputed to Proteſtants as part of their hereſy; they being call'd by them in contempt the Evangelical men, and Scripturarians. And the Bible in the vulgar Tongue of any Nation, is commonly reckon'd among prohibited Books, and as ſuch publickly burnt when met with by the Inquiſitors: and the perſon who is found with it, or to read therein, is ſubjected to ſevere penalties.

The Judgement of the Primitive Church therein.

2. For the vindication of the truth of God, and to put to ſhame thoſe unhappy Innovators, who amidſt great pretences to Antiquity, and veneration to the Scriptures, prevaricate from both: I think it may not be amiſs to ſhew plainly the mind of the primitive Church herein; and that in as few words as the matter will admit.

The particular circumſtance of Irenæus *and* Tertullian.

3. Firſt I premiſe that *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* having to do with Hereticks, who boaſted themſelves to be emendators of the Apoſtles, aud wiſer than they, deſpiſing their authority, rejecting ſeveral parts of the Scripture, and obtruding other writings in their ſtead, have had recourſe unto Tradition, with a ſeeming preference of it unto Scripture. Their adverſaries having no common principle beſides the owning the name of Chriſtians; it was impoſſible to convince them, but by a recourſe to ſuch a *medium* which they would allow. But theſe Fathers being to ſet down and eſtabliſh their Faith, are moſt expreſs in reſolving it into Scripture: and when they recommend Tradition, ever mean ſuch as is alſo Apoſtolical.

The Judgement of Irenæus.

4. *Irenæus* in the ſecond Book, ch. 37. tells us, *that the Scriptures are perfect, as dictated by the word of God and his Spirit.* And the ſame Father begins his 3d. Book in this manner, *The diſpoſition of our ſalvation is no otherwiſe known by us, than by thoſe by whom the Goſpel was brought to us; which indeed they firſt preach'd, but afterward deliver'd it to us in the Scripture, to be the foundation and pillar of our Faith. Nor may we imagine, that they began to preach to others, before they themſelves had perfect knowledge, as ſome are bold to ſay; boaſting themſelves to be emendators of the Apoſtles. For after our Lords Reſurrection, they were endued with the power of the holy Spirit from on high; and having perfect knowledge, went forth to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of ſalvation, and celeſtial praiſe*

unto

men. Each and all of whom had the Goſpel of God. So St. Matthew *wrote the Goſpel to the* Hebrews, *in their tongue,* S. Peter *and St.* Paul *preach'd at* Rome, *and there founded a Church:* Mark *the Diſciple and interpreter of* Peter, *deliver'd in writing what he had preach'd, and* Luke *the follower of* Paul *ſet down in his Book the Goſpel he had deliver'd. Afterward Saint* John *at* Epheſus *in* Aſia *publiſh'd his Goſpel, &c.* In his fourth Book, c. 66. he directs all the Hereticks with whom he deals, to *read diligently the Goſpel deliver'd by the Apoſtles, and alſo read diligently the Prophets,* aſſuring *they ſhall there find every action, every doctrine, and every ſuffering of our Lord declared by them.*

5. Thus *Tertullian* in his Book of Preſcriptions, c. 6. *It is not lawful for us to introduce any thing of our own will, nor make any choice upon our arbitrement. We have the Apoſtles of our Lord for our Authors, who themſelves took up nothing of their own will or choice; but faithfully imparted to the Nations the Diſcipline which they had received from Chriſt. So that if an Angel from heaven ſhould teach another doctrine, he were to be accurſt.* And c. 25. *'Tis madneſs,* ſays he of the Hereticks, *when they confeſs that the Apoſtles were ignorant of nothing, nor taught things different; to think that they did not reveal all things to all:* which he inforces in the following chap. In his Book againſt *Hermogenes,* c. 23. he diſcourſes thus; *I adore the plenitude of the Scripture, which diſcovers to me the Creator, and what was creation. Alſo in the Goſpel I find the Word was the Arbiter and Agent in the Creation. That all things were made of pre-exiſtent matter I never read. Let* Hermogenes, *and his journey-men ſhew that it is written. If it be not written, let him fear the woe, which belongs to them that add or detract.* And in the 39. of his Preſcript. *We feed our faith, raiſe our hope, and eſtabliſh our reliance with the ſacred Words.*

Of Tertullian.

6. In like manner *Hippolytus* in the Homily againſt *Noetus* declares, that *we acknowledge only from Scripture that there is one God. And whereas ſecular Philoſophy is not to be had, but from the reading of the doctrine of the Philoſohpers; ſo whoſoever of us will preſerve piety towards God, he cannot otherwiſe learn it than from the holy Scripture.* Accordingly Origen in the fifth Homily on *Leviticus,* ſays that *in the Scripture every word appertaining to God, is to be ſought and diſcuſt; and the knowledge of all things is to be received.*

Of Hippolytus.

7. What Saint *Cyprian*'s opinion was in this point, we learn at large from his Epiſtle to *Pompey.* For when Tradition was objected to him, he anſwers; *Whence is this Tradition? is it from the authority of our Lord and his Goſpel; or comes it from the commands of the Apoſtles in their Epiſtles? Almighty God declares that what is written ſhould be obey'd and practis'd. The Book of the Law, ſays he in* Joſhua, *ſhall not depart from thy mouth, but thou ſhalt meditate in it day and night, that you may obſerve and keep all that is written therein. So our Lord ſending his Apoſtles, commands them to baptize all Nations, and teach them to obſerve all things that he had commanded.* Again, *What obſtinacy and preſumption is it to prefer human Tradition to divine command; not conſidering that Gods wrath is kindled as often as his Precepts are diſſolv'd and neglected by reaſon of human Traditions? Thus God warns and ſpeaks by* Iſaiah: *this people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; but in vain do they worſhip me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Alſo the Lord in the Goſpel checks and reproves, ſaying, You reject the Law of God, that you may eſtabliſh your Tradition. Of which Precept the Apoſtle Saint* Paul *being mindful admoniſhes and inſtructs, ſaying: If any man teaches otherwiſe,*

Of St. Cyprian.

and hearkens not to ſound doctrine, and the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he is proud, knowing nothing: from ſuch we muſt depart. And again he adds, *There is a compendious way for religious and ſincere minds, both to depoſit their errors, and find out the truth. For if we return to the ſource and original of divine tradition, human error will ceaſe, and the ground of heavenly myſteries being ſeen, whatſoever was hid with clouds and darkneſs, will be manifeſt by the light of truth. If a pipe that brought plentiful ſupplies of water, fail on the ſuddain, do not men look to the fountain, and thence learn the cauſe of the defect, whether the ſpring it ſelf be dry; or if running freely, the water is ſtopt in its paſſage; that if by interrupted or broken conveyances, it was hindred to paſs, they being repair'd, it may again be brought to the City, with the ſame plenty as it flows from the ſpring? And this God's Prieſts ought to do at this time, obeying the commands of God, that if truth have ſwerv'd or fail'd in any particular, we go backward to the ſource of the Evangelical and Apoſtolicial Tradition, and there found our actings, from whence their order and origination began.*

Bellarmines *exception ſhew'd to be ain by the uthority of* t. Auſtin.

8. It is true *Bellarmine* reproaches this diſcourſe as erroneous; but whatever it might be in the inference which St. *Cyprian* drew from it, in it ſelf it was not ſo. For St. *Auſtin*, tho ſufficiently ingag'd againſt St. *Cyprian*'s concluſion, allows the poſition as moſt Orthodox; ſaying in the fourth Book of Baptiſm, c. 35. *Whereas he admoniſhes to go back to the fountain, that is, the Tradition of the Apoſtles, and thence bring the ſtream down to our times; 'tis moſt excellent, and without doubt to be done.*

The judgment of Euſebius.

9. Thus *Euſebius* expreſſes himſelf in his ſecond Book againſt *Sabellius*, *As it is a point of ſloth, not to ſeek into thoſe things, whereof one may enquire; ſo 'tis inſolence to be inquiſitive in others. But what are thoſe things which we ought to enquire into? Even thoſe which are to be found in the Scriptures: thoſe things which are not there to be found, let us not ſeek after. For if they ought to be known, the holy Ghoſt had not omitted them in the Scripture.*

Of Athanaſius.

10. *Athanaſius* in his Tract of the Incarnation ſays, *It is fit for us to adhere to the Word of God, and not relinquiſh it, thinking by ſyllogiſms to evade what is there clearly deliver'd.* Again in this Tract to *Serap.* of the Holy Ghoſt: *Ask not*, ſays he, *concerning the Trinity, but learn only from the Scriptures. For the inſtructions, which you will find there, are ſufficient.* And in his Oration againſt the Gentiles, declares, *That the Scriptures are ſufficient to the manifeſtation of the Truth.*

Of Optatus.

11. Agreeable to theſe is *Optatus* in his 5 Book againſt *Parmen.* who reaſons thus: *You ſay 'tis lawful to rebaptize, we ſay 'tis not lawful: betwixt your ſaying and our gainſaying the peoples minds are amus'd. Let no man believe either you or us. All men are apt to be contentious. Therefore judges are to be call'd in. Chriſtians they cannot be; for they will be parties, and thereby partial. Therefore a Judge is to be lookt out from abroad. If a Pagan, he knows not the myſteries of our Religion. If a Jew, he is an enemy to our baptiſm. There is therefore no earthly Judge; but one is to be ſought from heaven. Yet there is no need of a reſort to heaven, when we have in the Goſpel a Teſtament. And in this caſe, celeſtial things may be compar'd to earthly. So it is as with a father who has many children; while he is preſent he orders them all, and there is no need of a written Will: Accordingly Chriſt when he was preſent upon earth, from time to time commanded the Apoſtles whatſoever was neceſſary. But as the earthly father finding himſelf to be at the point of death, and fearing that after his departure his children ſhould quarrel among themſelves, he calls witneſſes, and puts his mind in writing; and if any difference*

ference ariſe among the brethren, they go not to their fathers Sepulcher, but repair to his Will and Teſtament; and he who reſts in his grave, ſpeaks ſtill in his writing, as if he were alive. Our Lord who left his Will among us, is now in heaven, therefore let us ſeek his Commands in the Goſpel, as in his Will.

Of Cyril of Jeruſ.

12. Thus *Cyril of Jer.*Cat.4. *Nothing no not the leaſt concernment of the divine and holy Sacraments of our Faith, is to be deliver'd without the holy Scripture: believe not me unleſs I give you a demonſtration of what I ſay from the Scripture.*

Of St. Baſil.

13. St. *Baſil* in his Book of the true Faith ſays, *If God be faithful in all his ſayings, his words and works, they remaining for ever, and being done in truth and equity; it muſt be an evident ſign of infidelity and pride, if any one ſhall reject what is written, and introduce what is not written.* In which Books he generally declares that he will write nothing but what he receives from the holy Scripture: and that he abhorrs from taking it elſewhere. In his 29. Homily againſt the Antitrinit. *Believe*, ſays he, *thoſe which are written; ſeek not thoſe which are not written.* And in his Eth. reg. *26. Every word and action ought to be confirm'd by the Teſtimony of the divinely inſpir'd Scriptures to the eſtabliſhment of the Faith of the good, and reproof of the wicked.*

Of St. Ambroſe.

14. St. *Ambroſe* in the firſt Book of his Offic. ſays: *How can we make uſe of any thing which is not to be found in the Scripture?* And in his Inſtit. of Virgins. *I read he is the firſt, but read not he is the ſecond; let them who ſay he is the ſecond, ſhew it from the reading.*

Of Gregor. Nyſſen.

15. *Greg. Nyſſen* in his Dial. of the ſoul and reſurrect. ſays, *'Tis undeniable, that truth is there only to be plac'd, where there is the ſeal of Scripture Teſtimony.*

Of St Jerom.

16. St. *Jerom* againſt *Helvidius* declares, *As we deny not that which is written, ſo we refuſe thoſe which are not written.* And in his Comment on the 98. Pſal. *Every thing that we aſſert, we muſt ſhew from the holy Scripture. The word of him that ſpeaks has not this authority as Gods precept.* And on the 87. Pſal. *Whatever is ſaid after the Apoſtles, let it be cut off, nor have afterwards authority. Tho' one be holy after the Apoſtles, though one be eloquent; yet has he not authority.*

Of St. Auſtin.

17. St. *Auſtin* in his Tract of the unity of the Church, c. 12. *acknowledges that he could not be convinc'd but by the Scriptures of what he was to believe; and adds, they are read with ſuch manifeſtation, that he who believes them muſt confeſs the doctrine to be moſt true.* In the 2 Book of Chriſtian doctrine, c. 9. he ſays, that *in the plain places of Scripture are found all thoſe things that concern Faith and Manners.* And in Eph. 4. 42. *All things which have bin exhibited heretofore as done to mankind, and what we now ſee and deliver to our poſterity, the Scripture has not paſt them in ſilence, ſo far forth as they concern the ſearch or defence of our Religion.* In his Tract of the good of Widowhood, he ſays to *Julian*, the perſon to whom he addreſſes: *What ſhall I teach you more than that we read in the Apoſtle: for the holy Scripture ſettles the rule of our doctrine; that we think not any thing more than we ought to think; but to think ſoberly, as God has dealt to every man the meaſure of Faith. Therefore my teaching is only to expound the words of this Doctor,* Ep. 157. *Where any ſubject is obſcure, and paſſes our comprehenſion, and the Scripture do's not plainly afford its help, there human conjecture is preſumptuous in defining.*

Of Theophilus Alex.

18. Theophilus of *Alex.* in his 2. Paſchal Homily, tells us, that *'tis the ſuggeſtion of a diabolical ſpirit to think that any thing beſides the Scripture has divine authority.* And in his third he adds, that *the Doctors of the Church having the Teſtimony of the Scripture, lay firm foundation of their doctrine.*

Of St Chryſoſtom.

19. Chryſoſtom in his 3d. Homily on the firſt of the *Theſſ.* aſſerts, that *from the alone reading or hearing of the Scripture one may learn all things neceſſary.* So Hom. 34. on Acts 15. he declares, *A Heathen comes and ſays: I would willingly be a Chriſtian, but I know not who to joyn my ſelf to; for there are many contentions among you, many ſeditions and tumults; ſo that I am in doubt what opinion I ſhould chuſe. Each man ſays, what I ſay is true, and I know not whom to believe; each pretends to Scripture which I am ignorant of. 'Tis very well the iſſue is put here: for if the appeal were to reaſon, in this caſe there would be juſt occaſion of being troubled: But when we appeal to Scripture, and they are ſimple and certain, you may eaſily your ſelf judge. He that agrees with the Scripture is a Chriſtian, he that reſiſts them, is far out of the way.* And on Pſal. 95. *If any thing be ſaid without the Scripture, the mind halts between different opinions; ſometimes inclining as to what is probable, anon rejecting as what is frivolous: but when the teſtimony of holy Scripture is produc'd, the mind both of ſpeaker and hearer is confirm'd.* And Hom. 4. on *Lazar. Tho' one ſhould riſe from the dead, or an Angel come down from heaven, we muſt believe the Scripture; they being fram'd by the Lord of Angels, the quick and the dead.* And Hom. 13. 2 Cor. 7. *Is it not an abſurd thing that when we deal with men about money, we will truſt no body, but caſt up the ſum, and make uſe of our counters; but in religious affairs ſuffer our ſelves to be led aſide by other mens opinions, even then when we have by an exact ſcale and touch-ſtone, the dictate of the divine Law. Therefore I pray and exhort you, that giving no heed to what this or that man ſays, you would conſult the holy Scripture, and thence learn the Divine riches, and purſue what you have learnt.* And Hom. 58. on John 10. 1. *'Tis the mark of a thief, that comes not in by the door, but another way: now by the door the teſtimony of the Scripture is ſignified.* And Hom. on Gal. 1. 8. *The Apoſtle ſays not, If any man teach a contrary doctrine let him be accurs'd, or if he ſubvert the whole Goſpel; but if he teach any thing beſide the Goſpel which you have receiv'd, or vary any little thing, let him be accurs'd.*

Of Cyril of Alexand.

20. Cyril of *Alex.* againſt *Jul.* 7. ſays, *The holy Scripture it ſufficient to make them who are inſtructed in it, wiſe unto ſalvation, and indued with moſt ample knowledge.*

Of Theod.

21. Theodoret Dial. 1. *I am perſwaded only by the holy Scripture.* And Dial. 2. *I am not ſo bold to affirm any thing, not ſpoken of in the Scripture.* And again, Qu. 45. upon *Geneſ. We ought not to enquire after what is paſt over in ſilence, but acquieſce in what is written*

From the premiſes laid down, the inference will be eaſy, whether the Church of England *be heretical in her determining the Scriptures to be a ſufficient rule of faith without the aid of Tradition.*

22. It were eaſie to enlarge this diſcourſe into a Volume; but having taken, as they offer'd themſelves, the ſuffrages of the Writers of the four firſt Centuries, I ſhall not proceed to thoſe that follow. If the holy Scripture were a perfect rule of Faith and manners to all Chriſtians heretofore, we may reaſonably aſſure our ſelves it is ſo ſtill; and will now guide us into all neceſſary truth, and conſequently make us wiſe unto ſalvation, without the aid of oral Tradition, or the new mintage of a living infallible Judge of controverſy. And the impartial Reader will be enabled to judge whether our appeal to the holy Scripture, in all occaſions of controverſy, and recommendation of it to the ſtudy of every Chriſtian, be that hereſy and innovation which it is ſaid to be.

The guilt of taking away the Scriptures from the people a guilt of the higheſt nature.

23. It is, we know, ſeverely imputed to the Scribes and Phariſees by our Saviour, that they took from the people *the key of knowledge,* Luk. 11. 52. and had *made the word of God of none effect by their Traditions,* Mat. 15. 6. but they never attempted what has bin ſince practiſed by their ſucceſſors in the Weſtern Church, to take away the Ark of the Teſtament it ſelf, and

cut off, not only the efficacy, but very poſſeſſion of the Word of God by their Traditions. Surely this had bin exceeding criminal from any hand: but that the Biſhops and Governors of the Church, and the univerſal and infallible Paſtor of it, who claim the office to interpret the Scriptures, exhort unto, and aſſiſt in the knowledge of them, ſhould be the men who thus rob the people of them, carries with it the higheſt aggravations both of cruelty and breach of truſt. *If any man ſhall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy*, ſays St. *John*, Rev. 22. 19. *God ſhall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* What vengeance therefore awaits thoſe who have taken away not only from one Book, but at once the Books themſelves, even all the Scriptures, the whole Word of God?

SECT. VII.

Hiſtorical reflections upon the Events which have happen'd in the Church ſince the withdrawing of the Holy Scripture.

1. TWill in this place be no uſeleſs contemplation to obſerve, after the Scriptures had bin raviſht from the people in the Church of *Rome*, what pitiful pretenders were admitted to ſucceed. And firſt becauſe Laymen were preſum'd to be illiterate, and eaſily ſeducible by thoſe writings which were in themſelves difficult, and would be wreſted by the *unlearned to their own deſtruction*; Pictures were recommended in their ſtead, and complemented as the Books of the Laity; which ſoon improv'd into a neceſſity of their worſhip, and that groſs ſuperſtition which renders Chriſtianity abominated by Turks, and Jews, and Heathens unto this day.

Pictures were made the books of the Laity when the Scriptures were taken from them.

2. I would not be haſty in charging Idolatry upon the Church of *Rome*, or all in her Communion; but that their Image-worſhip is a moſt fatal ſnare, in which vaſt numbers of unhappy ſouls are taken, no man can doubt who hath with any regard travail'd in Popiſh Countries, I my ſelf and thouſands of others, whom the late troubles, or other occaſions ſent abroad, are and have bin witneſſes thereof. Charity, 'tis true, believes all things, but it do's not oblige men to disbelieve their eyes. 'Twas the out-cry of *Micah*, againſt the Danites, *Jud.* 18. 24. *Ye have taken away my gods which I have made, and the prieſt, and are gone away, and what have I more?* but the Laity of the Roman Communion may enlarge the complaint, and ſay; you have take away the Oracles of our God, and ſet up every where among us graven and molten Images, and Teraphims, and what have we more? and 'twas lately the loud, and I doubt is ſtill, the unanſwerable complaint of the poor *Americans*, that they were deny'd to worſhip their Pagod once in the year, when they who forbad them, worſhip'd theirs every day.

Hereby the ignorant became enſnar'd to Idolatry.

3. The Jews before the Captivity, notwithſtanding the recent memory of the Miracles in *Egypt* and the Wilderneſs, and the firſt conqueſt of the Land of *Canaan*, with thoſe that ſucceeded under the Judges and Kings of *Iſrael* and *Judah*; as alſo the expreſs command of God, and the menaces of Prophets, ever and anon fell to downright Idolatry, but after their return unto this day, have kept themſelves from falling into that ſin, tho they had no Prophets to inſtruct them, no miracles or government to encourage or conſtrain them. The reaſon of which a very learned

After the captivity of Babylon the Jews never fell into Idolatry, by their having the Scriptures conſtantly read in their ſynagogues. The weſtern Chriſtian Church has inverted the obſervation.

learned-men in his Diſcourſe of religious Aſſemblies takes to be, the reading and teaching of the Law in their Synagogues; which was perform'd with great exactneſs after the return from the Captivity, but was not ſo perform'd before. And may we not invert the obſervation, and impute Image worſhip now ſet up in the Chriſtian Church, to the forbidding the reading of the Scripture in the Churches, and interdicting the private uſe, and inſtitution in them?

A ſecond ſupply in the place of the Scripture were Legends, which made Chriſtianity to be thought ridiculous.

4. For a farther ſupplement in place of the Scriptures, whoſe Hiſtory was thought not edifying enough, the Legends of the Saints were introduc'd; ſtories ſo ſtupid, that one would imagine them deſign'd as an experiment how far credulity could be impos'd upon; or elſe fram'd to a worſe intent, that Chriſtianity by them might be made ridiculous. Yet theſe are recommended to uſe and veneration, while in the mean time the Word of God is utterly forbidden, whereby the parties to this unhappy practice (that I may ſpeak in the words of the Prophet *Jer.* 2. 13. *have committed two evils, they have forſaken the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns that can hold no water.*

A third conſequent was the obliging the publick Prayers to be in an unknown tongue.

5. Farther yet, the ſame unreaſonable tyranny which permitted not the Laity to underſtand Almighty God ſpeaking to them in the Scripture; hinder'd them from being ſuffer'd to underſtand the Church or themſelves ſpeaking to him in their prayers; whilſt the whole Roman office is ſo diſpos'd, that in defiance of the Apoſtles diſcourſe, 1 Cor. 14. *he that occupies the room of the unlearned muſt ſay amen, to thoſe prayers and praiſes which he has no comprehenſion of*: and by his endleſs repetitions of Pater's and Credo's, falls into that battology reprov'd by our Saviour, *Mat.* 6. 7. and as 'twas ſaid of the woman of *Samaria*, Joh. 4. 22. *knows not what he worſhips.* Yet this unaccountable practice is ſo much the darling of that Church, that when in *France* about eighteen years ſince, the Roman Miſſal was tranſlated into the vulgar Tongue, and publiſh'd by the direction of ſeveral of their Biſhops; the Clergy of *France* roſe up in great fury againſt the attempt, anathematizing in their circular Epiſtles, *all that ſold, read, or us'd the ſaid Book*: and upon complaint unto Pope *Alexander* the VII. he reſented the matter ſo deeply, as to iſſue out his Bull againſt it in the following words:

The Pope's reſentment of the tranſlation of the Miſſal by the Biſhops of France.

6. *Whereas ſons of perdition, endeavouring the deſtruction of ſouls, have tranſlated the Roman Miſſal into the French tongue, and ſo attempted to throw down and trample upon the Majeſty of the holy Rites comprehended in Latin words: as we abominate and deteſt the novelty, which will deform the beauty of the Church, and produce diſobedience, temerity, boldneſs, ſedition and ſchiſm; ſo we condemn, reprobate and forbid, the ſaid and all other ſuch Tranſlations, and interdict the reading and keeping to all and ſingular the faithful of whatever ſex, degree, order, condition, dignity, honour, preeminence,* &c. *under pain of excommunication. And we command the copies to be immediately burnt,* &c. So mortal a ſin it ſeems 'twas thought for the Laity to underſtand the Prayers in which they muſt communicate.

A fourth attempt of making a new authentick Text.

7. Nor is this all; agreeable to the other attempts upon the Holy Scripture, was the bold inſolence of making a new authentick Text, in that unknown Tongue In which the offices of prayer had bin, and were to be kept diſguiſ'd; which was done by the decree of the Councel of *Trent* in the fourth Seſſion. But when the Councel had given this prerogative to the Verſion which is call'd Vulgar, the ſucceeding Popes began to conſider what that Verſion was; and this work *Pius* the fourth and fifth ſet upon; but prevented by death fail'd to complete it, ſo that the honour of the per-

formance fell to *Sixtus* the fifth, who in the plenitude of his Apoſtolick power, the Tranſlation being reform'd to his mind, commanded it to be that genuine ancient Edition which the *Trent* Fathers had before made authentick, and under the pain of excommunication requir'd it to be ſo receiv'd: which he do's in this form: *Of our certain knowledge, and the plenitude of our Apoſtolick power, we order and declare that vulgar Edition which has bin receiv'd for authentick by the Council of* Trent, *is without doubt or controverſy to be eſteem'd this very one, which being amended as well as it is poſſible, and printed at the Vatican preſs, we publiſh to be read in the whole Chriſtian Republick, and in all Churches of the Chriſtian world. Decreeing that it having bin approv'd by the conſent of the holy univerſal Church, and the holy Fathers, and then by the Decree of the general Council of* Trent, *and now by the Apoſtolick authority deliver'd to us by the Lord; is the true, legitimate, authentick, and undoubted, which is to be receiv'd and held in all publick and private Diſputations, Lectures, Preachings, and Expoſitions, &c.* But notwithſtanding this certain knowledge and plenitude of Apoſtolick power, ſoon after came *Clement* the Eight, and again reſumes the work of his predeceſſor *Sixtus*, diſcovers great and many errors in it, and puts out one more reform'd, yet confeſt by himſelf to be imperfect; which now ſtands for the authentick Text, and carries the title of the Bible put forth by *Sixtus*, notwithſtanding all its alterations. So well do's the Roman Church deſerve the honour which ſhe pretends to, of being the *Miſtreſs of all Churches*; and ſo infallible is the holy Chair in its determinations: and laſtly ſo authentick a Tranſcript of the word of God (concerning which 'tis ſaid Mat. 5. 18. *one jot or one title ſhall not fail*) is that which ſhe eſtabliſht, and that has receiv'd ſo many, and yet according to the confeſſion of the infallible Corrector, wants ſtill more alterations.

A further conſequent was the laying aſide the ancient courſe of penance.

8. Dependent upon this, and as great a miſchief as any of the former conſequent to the withdrawing of the Scripture, I take to be the ſtep it made to the overthrow of the ancient and the moſt uſeful diſcipline of the Church in point of Penance, whoſe rigors always heretofore preceded the poſſibility of having Abſolution. Now of this we know a ſolemn part was the ſtate of Audience, when the lapſt perſon was receiv'd, after long attendance without doors, proſtrations, and lamentations there, within the entrance of the Church; and was permitted with the Catechumens Candidates of Baptiſm, to hear the readings of the Scripture, and ſtay till Prayer began, but then depart. He was oblig'd to hear the terrors of the Lord, the threats of the Divine Law againſt ſin and ſinners, to ſtand among the unbaptiz'd and heathen multitude, and learn again the elements of that holy Faith from which he had prevaricated; and ſo in time be render'd capable of the devotions of the Faithful, and afterward the reception of the Euchariſt. But when the Scriptures were thought uſeleſs or dangerous to be underſtood and heard, it was conſequent that the ſtate of Audience ſhould be cut off from Penance, and that the next to it, upon the ſelf-ſame principle ſhould be diſmiſt: and ſo the long probation formerly requir'd ſhould be ſupplanted; and the compendious way of pardoning firſt, and repenting afterwards, the endleſs circle of ſinning and being abſolv'd, and then ſinning and being abſolv'd again, ſhould prevail upon the Church. Which ſtill obtains, notwithſtanding the complaints, and irrefragable demonſtrations of learned men even of the Romiſh Communion, who plainly ſhew this now receiv'd method, to be an innovation groundleſs and unreaſonable, and moſt pernicious in its conſequents.

Heretofore not only thoſe who were under cenſure but the unbaptiz'd were in the ſtate of Audience to hear the Scriptures read.

9. And, by the way, we may take notice that there cannot be a plainer evidence of the judgment of the Church, concerning the neceſſity of the Scriptures being known, not only by the learned but mean Chriſtian, and the intereſt they have therein; than is the ancient courſe of Penance, eſtabliſht by the practice of all the firſt Ages, and almoſt as many Councils, whether general or local, as have decreed any thing concerning Diſcipline; with the penitentiary Books and Canons, which were written for the firſt eleven hundred years together in the whole Chriſtian world. For if even the unbaptized Catechumen, and the lapſt ſinner, notwithſtanding their ſlender knowledge in the myſteries of Faith, or frail pretence to the privilege thereof, had a right to the ſtate of Audience, and was oblig'd to hear the Scripture read; ſurely the meaneſt unobnoxious Laick, was in as advantageous circumſtances, and might not only be truſted with the reading of thoſe ſacred Books, but might claim them as his birth-right.

Ignorance and immorality conſequents of withdrawing the Scripture.

10. I may juſtly, over and above what has bin hitherto alledg'd impute to the Governors of the ſame Church, and their with-holding from the Laity the holy Scripture; the many dangerous errors, groſs ignorances, and ſcandalous immoralities which have prevail'd among them both. It is no new method of divine vengeance, that there ſhould *be like people, like prieſt*, Hoſ. 4. 9. *and that the idle ſhepherd who led his flock into the ditch, ſhould fall therein himſelf*, Mat. 15. 14. And as the Prophet *Zachary* deſcribes it, c. 11. 17. *The ſword ſhall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm ſhall be clean dried up, and his right eye ſhall be utterly darkned.*

And laſtly lewd reproches of Scripture.

11. But no conſequence can be more obviouſly deducible from that practice, than that men ſhould juſtifie the with-holding of the Scripture by leſſening its credit, and depreciating its worth: which has occaſion'd thoſe reproaches which by the writers of the Church of *Rome*, of beſt note, have bin caſt upon it. As that it was *a noſe of wax, a leaden rule, a deaf and uſeleſs deputy to God in the office of a judge; of leſs authority than the Roman Church, and of no more credit than Æſop's Fables, but for the teſtimony of the ſaid Church; that they contain things apt to raiſe laughter or indignation, that the Latin Tranſlation in the Complutenſian Bible is plac'd between the Hebrew Text, and the Septuagint Verſion, as our Saviour was at his Crucifixion between two thieves; and that the Vulgar edition is of ſuch authority that the Originals ought to be mended by it, rather than it ſhould be mended from them*: which are the complements of Cardinal *Bellarmin*, *Hoſius*, *Eckius*, *Perron*, *Ximenes*, *Coqueus*, and others of that Communion: words to be anſwer'd by a Thunderbolt, and fitter for the mouth of a *Celſus* or a *Porphyrie*, than of the pious ſons, and zealous champions of the Church of Chriſt.

The excuſe made by the Romaniſts conſider'd.

12. 'Tis to be expected that the Romaniſts ſhould now wipe their mouths, and plead not guilty; telling us that they permit the Scripture to the Laity in their mother Tongue: And to that purpoſe the Fathers of *Rhemes* and *Doway* have publiſht an Engliſh Bible for thoſe of their Communion. I ſhall therefore give a ſhort and plain account of the whole affair, as really it ſtands, and then on God's name let the Romaniſts make the beſt of their Apology.

The licence of reading the Scripture is ſo clog'd, that few will be capable of that indulgence.

13. The fourth rule of the Index of prohibited Books compos'd upon the command and auſpice of the Council of *Trent*, and publiſh'd by the Authority of *Pius* the fourth, *Sixtus* the fifth, and *Clement* the eighth, runs thus, *Since 'tis manifeſt by experience, that if the holy Bible be ſuffer'd promiſcuouſly in the Vulgar Tongue, ſuch is the temerity of men, that greater detriment than advantage will thence ariſe; in this matter let the judgment of the Biſhop or inquiſitor be ſtood to: that with the advice of the Curat or Confeſſor, they*

may give leave for the reading of the Bible in the vulgar Tongue, tranſlated by Catholicks, to ſuch as they know will not receive damage, but increaſe of Faith and Piety thereby. Which faculty they ſhall have in writing; and whoſoever without ſuch faculty ſhall preſume to have or to read the Bible, he ſhall not, till he hath deliver'd it up, receive abſolution of his ſins. Now (to paſs over the iniquity of obliging men to ask leave to do that which God Almighty commands) when 'tis conſider'd how few of the Laity can make means to the Biſhop or Inquiſitor, or convince them, or the Curate or Confeſſor, that they are ſuch who will not receive damage, but increaſe of Faith and Piety by the reading of the Scripture; and alſo have intereſt to prevail with them for their favour herein: and after all, can and will be at the charge of taking out the faculty, which is ſo penally requir'd: 'tis eaſy to gueſs what thin numbers of the Laity are likely or indeed capable of reaping benefit by this Indulgence pretended to be allow'd them.

Beſides, is in it ſelf declar'd to be void.

14. But, beſides all this what ſhall we ſay, if the power it ſelf of giving Licences be a mere ſhew, and really ſignifies juſt nothing? In the obſervation ſubjoyn'd to this fourth rule it is declar'd, That *the Impreſſion and Edition thereof gives no new faculty to Biſhops, or inquiſitors, or Superiors of Regulars to grant Licences of buying, reading, or retaining Bibles publiſht in a vulgar Tongue; ſince hitherto by the command and practice of the holy Roman and univerſal Inquiſition, the power of giving ſuch faculties, to read or retain vulgar Bibles, or any parts of Scripture of the Old or New Teſtament, in any vulgar Tongue; or alſo Summaries or hiſtorical Compendiums of the ſaid Bibles or Books of Scripture, in whatever Tongues they are written, has bin taken away.* And ſure if a Lay-man cannot read the Bible without a faculty, and it is not in any ones power to grant it; 'twill evidently follow that he cannot read it: And ſo the pretence of giving liberty, owns the ſhame of openly refuſing it, but has no other effect or conſequence. And if any Romaniſt among us, or any other Proteſtant Country enjoys any liberty herein, 'tis merely by connivance, and ow'd to a fear leſt the votary ſhould be loſt, and take the Bible where it was without difficulty to be had, if ſtrictneſs ſhould be us'd. And ſhould Popery, which God forbid, become paramount, the Tranſlations of the Scripture into our Mother Tongues, would be no more endur'd here, than they are in *Spain*: and they who have formerly bin wary in communicating the Scriptures, remembring how thereby their errors have bin detected, would upon a revolution effectually provide for the future, and be ſure to keep their people in an Egyptian darkneſs, that might it ſelf be felt, but that allow'd the notices of no other object. They would not be content with that compoſition of the Ammonites, to *thruſt out all the right eyes* of thoſe that ſubmitted to them, 1 *Sam.* 11. 2. but would put out both, as the Philiſtines did to *Sampſon*, that they might make their miſerable captive for ever *grind in their Mill*, Jud. 16. 21.

The way for Proteſtants to keep their Bibles, is to live worthy the bleſſing they enjoy in them.

15. But this heavieſt of judgments will never fall upon the Reform'd Churches, till by their vicious practice and contempt of the Divine Law, they have deſerted their profeſſion, and made themſelves utterly unworthy of the bleſſings they enjoy, and the light of that Goſpel which with noonday brightneſs has ſhin'd among them. Upon which account, I ſuppoſe it may not be impertinent in the next place to ſubjoyn ſome plain directions, and cautionary advices, concerning the uſe of theſe ſacred Books.

SECT.

Sect. VIII.

Neceſſary Cautions to be us'd in the reading of the Holy Scripture.

What qualifications are neceſſary to make the Scripture uſeful to the reader.

1. It is a common obſervation, that the moſt generous and ſprightly Medicines are the moſt unſafe, if not apply'd with due care and regimen: And the remark holds as well in ſpiritual as corporal remedies. The Apoſtle aſſerts it upon his own experience that the Doctrine of the Goſpel, which was to ſome *the ſavour of life unto life, was to others the ſavour of death*, 2 Cor. 2. 15. And the ſame effect that the oral Word had then, the written Word may have now; not that either the one or the other have any thing in them that is of it ſelf mortiferous, but becomes ſo by the ill diſpoſition of the perſons who ſo pervert it. It is therefore well worth our enquiry, what qualifications on our part are neceſſary to make the Word be to us what it is in it ſelf, *the power of God unto ſalvation*, Rom. 1. 16. Of theſe ſome are previous before our reading, ſome are concomitant with it, and ſome are ſubſequent and follow after it.

Firſt, to come with ſincerity.

2. Of thoſe that go before, ſincerity is a moſt eſſential requiſit: by ſincerity, I mean an upright intention, by which we direct our reading to that proper end for which the holy Scriptures were deſign'd; *viz.* the knowing Gods will in order to the practiſing it. This honeſt ſimplicity of heart is that which Chriſt repreſents by the *good ground*, where alone it was that the ſeed could fructify, *Mat.* 13. 8. And he that brings not this with him, brings only the ſhadow of a Diſciple. The *word of God is* indeed *ſharper than a two-edged ſword*, Heb. 4. 12. but what impreſſion can a ſword make on a body of air; which ſtill ſlips from, and eludes its thruſts? And as little can all the practical diſcourſes of holy Writ make on him, who brings only his ſpeculative faculties with him, and leaves his will and affections behind him: which are the only proper ſubjects for it to work on.

As the guides of practice,

3. To this we may probably impute that ſtrange inefficaciouſneſs we ſee of the Word. Alas men rarely apply it to the right place: our moſt inveterate diſeaſes lie in our morals; and we ſuffer the Medicine to reach no farther than our intellects. As if he that had an ulcer in his bowels, ſhould apply all his balſams and ſanatives only to his head. 'Tis true, the holy Scriptures are the treaſures of Divine Wiſdom; the Oracles to which we ſhould reſort for ſaving knowledge: but they are alſo the rule and guide of holy Life: and he that covets to know Gods will for any purpoſe but to practiſe it, is only ſtudious to entitle himſelf to the greater number of *ſtripes*, Luke 12. 47.

And not bare knowledge.

4. Nay farther, he that affects only the bare knowledge, is oft diſappointed even of that. The Scripture, like the Pillar of fire and cloud, enlightens the Iſraelites, thoſe who ſincerely reſign themſelves to its guidance; but it darkens and confounds the Egyptians, *Exod.* 14. 20. And 'tis frequently ſeen, that thoſe who read only to become knowing, are toll'd on by their curioſity into the more abſtruſe and myſterious parts of Scripture, where they entangle themſelves in inextricable mazes and confuſions; and inſtead of acquiring more ſuperlative knowledge, loſe thoſe eaſy and common notions which lie obvious to every plain well meaning Reader. I fear this Age affords too many and too frequent inſtances of this, in men who have loſt God in the midſt of his Word, and ſtudied Scripture till they have renounc'd its Author.

5. And ſure this infatuation is very juſt, and no more than God himſelf has warn'd us of, who *takes the wiſe in their craftineſs*, Job 5. 15. 12. but appropriates his *ſecrets only to them that fear him*, and has promis'd *to teach the meek his way*, Pſal. 25.9,14. And this was the method Chriſt obſerv'd in his preaching; unveiling thoſe truths to his Diſciples, which to the Scribes and Phariſees, his inquiſitive, yet refractary hearers, he wrapt up in parables: not that he diſlik'd their deſire of knowledge, but their want of ſincerity: which is ſo fatal a defect as blaſts our purſuits, tho of things in themſelves never ſo excellent. This we find exemplify'd in *Simon Magus*, Acts 8. who tho he coveted a thing in it ſelf very deſirable, the power of conferring the Holy Ghoſt, yet deſiring it not only upon undue conditions, but for ſiniſter ends, he not only miſt of that, but was (after all his convincement by the Apoſtles miracles, and the engagement of his Baptiſm) immerſt *in the gall of bitterneſs*; and at laſt advanc'd to that height of blaſphemy, as to ſet up himſelf for a God, ſo becoming a laſting *memento*, how unſafe it is to prevaricate in holy things.

The ſpeculative enquirers frequently loſe God in the midſt of his Word.

6. But as there is a ſincerity of the Will in order to practice, ſo there is alſo a ſincerity of the Underſtanding in order to belief; and this is alſo no leſs requiſite to the profitable reading of Scripture. I mean by this, that we come with a preparation of mind, to imbrace indifferently whatever God there reveals as the object of our Faith: that we bring our own opinions, not as the clue by which to unfold Scripture, but to be try'd and regulated by it. The want of this has bin of very pernicious conſequence in matter both of Faith and Speculation. Men are commonly prepoſſeſt ſtrongly with their own notions, and their errand to Scripture is not to lend them light to judge of them, but aids to back and defend them.

There is requir'd ſincerity not only in reference to practice, but alſo ſpeculation.

7. Of this there is no Book of Controverſy that do's not give notorious proof, the Socinian can eaſily overlook the beginning of St. *John* that ſays, *The Word was God*, Joh. 1. 1. and all thoſe other places which plainly aſſert the Deity of our Saviour; if he can but divert to that other more agreeable Text, that *the Father is greater than I*. Among the Romaniſts, *Peter*'s being ſaid to be *firſt among the Apoſtles*, Matt. 10. 2. and that *on that Rock Chriſt would built his Church*, Matt. 16. 18. carries away all attention from thoſe other places where Saint *Paul* ſays he was not *behind the very chiefeſt of the Apoſtles*, 2 Cor. 11. 5. that upon him lay *the care of all the Churches*, 2 Cor. 11. 28. and that the Church was not built upon the *foundation of ſome one, but all the twelve Apoſtles*, Rev. 21. 14. So it fares in the buſineſs of the Euchariſt: *This is my body*, Mat. 26. 26. carries it away clear for Tranſubſtantiation, when our Saviour's calling that which he drunk *the fruit of the vine*, Mat. 26. 29. and then St. *Paul*'s naming the Elements in the Lords Supper ſeveral times over, Bread and Wine; *The Bread that we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt: the Cup that we bleſs, is it not the Communion, &c.* 1 Cor. 10. 16. And again, *He that eats this Bread, and drinks this Cup unworthily, &c.* 1 Cor. 11. can make no appearance of an argument.

This appears in ſeveral great inſtances.

8. Thus men once engag'd ranſack for Texts that carry ſome correſpondence to the opinions they have imbib'd; and thoſe how do they rack and ſcrew to bring to a perfect conformity; and improve every little probability into a demonſtration? On the other ſide, the contrary Texts they look on as enemies, and conſider them no farther than to provide fences and guards againſt them: So they bring Texts not into the ſcales to weigh, but into the field to skirmiſh, as Partizans and Auxiliaries of ſuch or ſuch opinions.

Men engag'd look on contrary Texts as enemies, and fortify againſt them.

Bend the rule to their work.

9. By this force of prepoſſeſſion it is, that that ſacred Rule, which is the meaſure and ſtandard of all rectitude, is it ſelf bow'd and diſtorted to countenance and abet the moſt contrary tenets: and like a variable picture, repreſents differing ſhapes according to the light in which you view it. And ſure we cannot do it a worſe office than to repreſent it thus diſſonant to it ſelf. Yet thus it muſt ſtill be till men come unbiaſt to the reading of it. And certainly there is all the reaſon in the world they ſhould do ſo: the ultimate *end of our faith is but the ſalvation of our ſouls*, 1 Pet. 1. 9. and we may be ſure the Scripture can beſt direct us what Faith it is which will lead us to that end.

We ſhould enquire the way to heaven with a travellers indifference.

10. Why ſhould we not then have the ſame indifference which a traveller hath, whether his way lie on this hand or that; ſo as it be the direct road to his journies end? For altho' it be infinitely material that I embrace right principles, yet 'tis not ſo that this ſhould be right rather than the other: and our wiſhes that it ſhould be ſo, proceed only from our prepoſſeſſions and fondneſs of our own conceptions, than which nothing is more apt to intercept the clear view of Truth. It therefore nearly concerns us to depoſit them, and to give up our ſelves without reſerve to the guidance of God's Word, and give it equal credit when it thwarts, as when it complies with our own notions.

The prejudicate reſerve the laſt appeal to themſelves, tho' they pretend the Scripture to be a judge of controverſies.

11. Without this, tho we may call Scripture the rule of Faith, and judge of controverſies; yet 'its manifeſt we make it not ſo, but reſerve ſtill the laſt appeal to our own prejudicate fancies: and then no wonder, tho we fall under the ſame occœcation which our Saviour upbraids to the Jews, *that ſeeing, we ſee not, neither do we underſtand*, Mat. 13. 14. For he that will not be ſav'd God's way, will hardly be ſo by his own. He that reſolves not impartially to embrace all the Scripture dictates, comes to them as unſincerely, as the remnant of the Jews did to *Jeremiah* to enquire of the Lord for them, which he no ſooner had done, but they proteſt againſt his meſſage, *Jer.* 42. 20. and may expect as fatal an event.

There are others who read the Scriptures inſidiouſly to cavil at them.

12. But there are a ſet of men who deal yet more inſincerely with the Word; that read it inſidiouſly, on purpoſe to collect matter of objection and cavil; that with a malicious diligence compare Texts in hope to find contradictions; and read attentively, but to no other end than to remark incoherences and defects in the ſtile: which when they think they have ſtarted, they have their deſign; and never will uſe a quarter of the ſame diligence in conſidering how they may be ſolv'd, or conſulting with thoſe who may aſſiſt them in it. For I think I may appeal to the generality of thoſe who have rais'd the loudeſt clamors againſt the Scripture, whether they have endeavour'd to render themſelves competent judges of it by inquiring into the Originals, or informing themſelves of thoſe local cuſtoms, peculiar Idioms, and many other circumſtances, by which obſcure Texts are to be clear'd. And tho I do not affirm it neceſſary to ſalvation that every man ſhould do this; yet I may affirm it neceſſary to him that will pretend to judge of the Bible: and he that without this condemns, it, do's it a manifeſt injury, as a Judge that ſhould paſs ſentence only upon the Indictment, without hearing the defence.

Who yet never throughly conſider'd them.

13. And certainly there cannot be any thing more unmanly and diſingenuous, than for men to inveigh and condemn before they inquire and examine. Yet this is the thing upon which ſo many value themſelves, aſſuming to be men of reaſon for that, for which the Scripture pronounces them brute beaſts: viz. *the ſpeaking evil of thoſe things they underſtand not*, 2 Pet. 2. 12. Would man uſe due diligence, no doubt many of thoſe

ſeeming contradictions would be reconciled, and the obſcurities cleared: and if any ſhould after all remain, he might find twenty things fitter to charge it on, than want of verity or perſpicuity in the inſpir'd Writers.

Allowances which the circumſtances of the writing the Scripture neceſſarily require.

14. Alas what human writing is there of near that Antiquity, wherein there are not many paſſages unintelligible? And indeed, unleſs modern times knew all thoſe national cuſtoms, obſolete Laws, particular Rites and Ceremonies, Phraſes and proverbial Sayings, to which ſuch ancient Books refer, 'tis impoſſible but ſome paſſages muſt ſtill remain obſcure. Yet in theſe we ordinarily have ſo much candor, as to impute their unintelligibleneſs to our own ignorance of thoſe things which ſhould clear them, the improprieties of ſtile, the variation that times make in dialects, or to the errors of Scribes, and do not preſently exclaim againſt the Authors as falſe and impertinent, or diſcard the whole Book for ſome ſuch paſſages.

Which allowances are given to other books with leſs reaſon.

15. And ſure what allowance we make to other Books, may with more reaſon be made to the Bible; which having bin writ ſo many Ages ſince, paſt thro infinite variety of hands, and (which is above all) having bin the object of the devils and wicked mens malice, lies under greater diſadvantages than any human compoſure: And doubtleſs men would be as equitable to that as they are to others, where it not that they more wiſh to have that falſe or irrational than any other Book. The plain parts of it, the precepts and threatnings ſpeak clearer than they deſire, gall and fret them; and therefore they will revenge themſelves upon the obſcurer, and ſeem angry that there are ſome things they underſtand not, when indeed their real diſpleaſure is at thoſe they do.

A ſecond preparatory qualification to the reading the Scripture is reverence.

16. A ſecond qualification preparatory to reading the Scripture is reverence. When we take the Bible in our hands, we ſhould do it with other ſentiments and apprehenſions than when we take a common Book; conſidering that it is the word of God, the inſtrument of our ſalvation; or upon our abuſe of it, a promoter of our ruin.

Not to read it caſually and at a venture.

17. And ſure this, if duly apprehended, cannot but ſtrike us with a reverential awe, make us to ſay with *Jacob*, Gen. 28. 17. *ſurely God is in this place*; controle all trifling fancies, and make us read, not for cuſtom or divertiſement, but with thoſe ſolemn and holy intentions which become the dignity of its Author. Accordingly we find holy men have in all Ages bin affected with it; and ſome to the inward reverence of the mind have joyn'd the outward of the body alſo, and never read it but upon their knees: an example that may both inſtruct and reproach our profaneneſs, who commonly read by chance, and at a venture: If a Bible happens in the way, we take it up as we would do a Romance, or Play-book; only herein we differ, that we diſmiſs it much ſooner, and retain leſs of its impreſſions.

Which ſort of negligence Numa *forbad in ſacred things.*

18. It was a Law of *Numa*, that no man ſhould meddle with Divine things, or worſhip the Gods, in paſſing, or by accident, but make it a ſet and ſolemn buſineſs. And every one knows with how great ceremony and ſolemnity the heathen Oracles were conſulted. How great a ſhame is it then for Chriſtians to defalk that reverence from the true God, which heathens allow'd their falſe ones?

This negligence happens either for want of habitual reverence to God; or our actual exciting it.

19. Now this proceeds ſometimes from the want of that habitual reverence we ſhould always have to it as Gods word, and ſometimes from want of actually exciting it when we go to read: for if the habit lies only dormant in us, and be not awak'd by actual conſideration, it avails us as little in our reading, as habitual ſtrength of a man do's towards labour, when he will not exert it for that end.

Where there is no reverence, there will be no obedience.

20. We ought therefore, as to make it our deliberate choice to read Gods word; ſo when we do it, to ſtir up our ſelves to thoſe ſolemn apprehenſions of its dignity and authority, as may render us malleable, and apt to receive its impreſſions: for where there is no reverence, 'tis not to be expected there ſhould be any genuine or laſting obedience.

St. Auſtin *makes the firſt requiſite to the knowledge of the* Scripture, *the love of it.*

21. St. *Auſtin* in his Tract to *Honoratus* of the advantage of believing, makes the firſt requiſite to the knowledge of the Scriptures to be the love of them. *Believe me,* ſays he, *every thing in the Scripture is ſublime and divine, its truth and doctrine are moſt accommodate to the refreſhment, and building up of our minds: and in all reſpects ſo order'd that every one may draw thence what is ſufficient for him; provided he approaches it with devotion, piety aad religion. The proof of this may require much reaſoning and diſcourſe. But this I am firſt to perſwade, that you do not hate the Authors, and then that you love them. Had we an ill opinion of* Virgil, *nay, if upon the account of the reputation he has gain'd with our Predeceſſors, we did not greatly love, before we underſtood him, we ſhould never patiently go through all the difficult queſtions Grammarians raiſe about him. Many employ themſelves in commenting upon him; we eſteem him moſt, whoſe expoſition moſt commends the Book, and ſhews that the Author not only was free from error, but did excellently well where he is not underſtood. And if ſuch an account happens not to be given, we impute it rather to the Interpreter than the Poet.*

None enquires of the tenets of any Sect of Philoſophers, from his adverſary.

22. Thus the good Father; whoſe words I have tranſcrib'd at large, as being remarkable to the preſent purpoſe; he alſo ſhews that the mind of no author is to be learnt from one averſe to his doctrine: as that 'tis vain to enquire of *Ariſtoteles*'s Book from one of a different Sect: or of *Archimedes* from *Epicurus*: the diſcourſe will be as diſpleaſing as the ſpeaker; and that ſhall be eſteem'd abſurd, which comes from one that is envy'd or deſpis'd.

A third preparative is Prayer.

23. A third preparative to our reading ſhould be prayer. The Scripture as it was dictated at firſt by the holy Spirit, ſo muſt ſtill owe its effects and influence to its cooperation. *The things of God*, the Apoſtle tells us, *are ſpiritually diſcern'd*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. And tho the natural man may well enough apprehend the letter, and grammatical ſenſe of the Word; yet its power and energy, that inſinuative perſwaſive force whereby it works on hearts, is peculiar to the Spirit; and therefore without his aids, the Scripture, whilſt it lies open before our eyes, may be *as a Book that is ſeal'd*, Eſai. 29. 11. be as ineffective as if the characters were illegible.

This will be the more neceſſary, becauſe the devil is buſie to ſteal away the ſeed that is ſown.

24. Beſides our Saviour tells us the devil is ſtill buſy *to ſteal away the ſeed as ſoon as it is ſown*, Mat. 13. 17. And unleſs we have ſome better guards than our own vigilance, he is ſure enough to proſper in his attempt. Let it therefore be our care to invoke the Divine Aid; and when ever we take the Bible into our hands, to dart up at leaſt a hearty ejaculation, that we may find its effects in our hearts. Let us ſay with *David, Open thou mine eyes, O Lord, that I may ſee the wondrous things of thy Law. Bleſſed art thou O Lord, O teach me thy ſtatutes*, Pſal. 119. Nay indeed, 'twill be fit matter of a daily ſolemn devotion, as our Church has made it an annual in the Collect on the ſecond Sunday in Advent: a prayer ſo apt and fully expreſſive of what we ſhould deſire in this particular, that if we tranſcribe not only the example, but the very words, I know not how we can form that part of our devotion more advantageouſly.

Conſiderations requir'd at the time of reading.

25. In the ſecond place we are to conſider what is requir'd of us at the time of reading the Scripture; which conſiſts principally in two things. The firſt of theſe is attention, which is ſo indiſpenſably requiſit, that without it all Books are alike, and all equally inſignificant: for he that adverts not

to the ſenſe of what he reads, the wiſeſt diſcourſes ſignify no more to him, than the moſt exquiſit muſick do's to a man perfectly deaf. The letters and ſyllables of the Bible are no more ſacred than thoſe of another Book; 'tis the ſenſe and meaning only that is divinely inſpir'd: and he that conſiders only the former, may as well entertain himſelf with a ſpelling-book.

26. We muſt therefore keep our minds fixt, and attend to what we read: 'tis a folly and lightneſs not to do ſo in human Authors; but 'tis a ſin and danger not to do ſo in this Divine Book. We know there can ſcarce be a greater inſtance of contempt and diſvalue, than to hear a man ſpeak, and not at all mind what he ſays: yet this vileſt affront do all thoſe put upon God, who hear or read his Word, and give it no attention. Yet I fear the practice is not more impious than it is frequent: for there are many that read the Bible, who if at the end of each Chapter they ſhould be call'd to account, I doubt they could produce very ſlender collections: and truly 'tis a ſad conſideration, that that ſacred Book is read moſt attentively by thoſe, who read it as ſome *preach the Goſpel*, Phil. 1. 15. *out of envy and ſtriſe.* How curiouſly do men inſpect, nay ranſack and embowel a Text to find a pretence for cavil and objection, whilſt men who profeſs to look there for life and ſalvation, read with ſuch a wretchleſs heedleſneſs, as if it could tell them nothing they were concern'd in, and to ſuch 'tis no wonder if their reading brings no advantage. God is not in this ſenſe *found of thoſe that ſeek him not*, Eſa. 65.1. 'Tis Satans part to ſerve himſelf of the bare words and characters of holy Writ, for charms & amulets: the vertue God has put there conſiſts in the ſenſe and meaning, and can never be drawn out by drouſy inadverting Readers.

'Tis a ſad contemplation that the Scripture is read moſt diligently by thoſe who would cavil at it.

27. This unattentiveneſs foreſtals all poſſibility of good. How ſhall that convince the underſtanding, or perſwade the affections, which do's not ſo much as enter the imagination? So that in this caſe the ſeed ſeems more caſt away than in any of thoſe inſtances the parable gives, *Matt.* 13. In thoſe it ſtill fell upon the ſoil, but in this it never reaches that; but is ſcatter'd and diſſipated, as with a mighty wind, by thoſe thoughts which have prepoſſeſs'd the mind. Let no man therefore take this ſacred Book into his hand, till he has turn'd out all diſtracting fancies, and has his faculties free and vacant for thoſe better objects which will there preſent themſelves. And when he has ſo diſpos'd himſelf for attention, then let him contrive to improve that attention to the beſt advantage.

The thoughts of the world are firſt to be laid aſide before we take up the Scripture.

28. To which purpoſe it may be very conducive to put it into ſome order and method. As for inſtance, when he reads the doctrinal part of Scripture, let him firſt and principally advert to thoſe plain Texts which contain the neceſſary points of Faith: that he may not owe his Creed only to his education, the inſtitution of his Parents or Tutors; but may know the true foundation on which it is bottom'd, *viz.* the word of God, and may thence be able to juſtify his Faith: and as St. *Peter* exhorts, be ready to give an anſwer to *every man that asks him a reaſon of the hope that is in him*, 1 Pet. 3. 15. For want of this it is, that Religion ſits ſo looſe upon men that every wind of Doctrine blows them into diſtinct and various forms; till at laſt their Chriſtianity it ſelf vapors away and diſappears.

Herein 'twill be conducive to reflect apart on Doctrinals,

29. But let men be careful thus to ſecure the foundation, and then 'twill be commendable in them (who are capable of it) to aſpire to higher degrees of ſpeculation: yet even in theſe it will be their ſafeſt courſe chiefly to purſue ſuch as have the moſt immediate influence on practice, and be more induſtrious to make obſervations of that ſort, than curious and critical remarks, or bold conjectures upon thoſe myſteries on which God has ſpread a veil.

And precepti

To take in the aſſiſtance of Expoſitors.

30. But beſides a mans own particular collections, it will be prudence in him to advantage himſelf of thoſe of others, and to conſult the learned'ſt and beſt Expoſitors: and that not only upon a preſent emergency, when he is to diſpute a point, (as moſt do) but in the conſtant courſe of his reading, wherein he will moſt ſedately and diſpaſſionately judge of the notions they offer.

Some parts of Scripture require more of our ſtudy than others.

31. As to the choice of the portions of Scripture to be read in courſe, tho I ſhall not condemn that of reading the whole Bible in order, yet 'tis apparent that ſome parts of it (as that of the Levitical Law) are not ſo aptly accommodated to our preſent ſtate, as others are; and conſequently not ſo edificatory to us: and therefore I cannot ſee why any man ſhould oblige himſelf to an equal frequency in reading them. And to this our Church ſeems to give her ſuffrage, by excluding ſuch out of her publick Leſſons. And if we govern our private reading by her meaſures, it will well expreſs our deference to her judgment; who has ſelected ſome parts of Scripture, not that ſhe would keep her children in ignorance of any, but becauſe they tend moſt immediately to practice.

The method of the Church excludes not additions of our own.

32. Neither will the daily reading the Scripture in the Rubric's order, hinder any man from acquainting himſelf with the reſt. For he may take in the other parts as ſupernumeraries to his conſtant task, and read them as his leiſure and inclination ſhall prompt. So that all the hurt that can accrue to him by this method, is the being invited to read ſometimes extraordinary proportions.

The objection againſt uſing the ſame reading with the Church is anſwer'd.

33. If it be objected, that to thoſe who daily hear the Church Service, 'Twill be a kind of tautology, firſt to read thoſe Leſſons in private, which ſoon after they ſhall hear read publickly: I anſwer that whatever men may pleaſe to call it, 'twill really be an advantage: For he that ſhall read a chapter by himſelf with due conſideration, and conſulting of good Paraphraſts, will have div'd ſo far into the ſenſe of it, that he will much better comprehend it when he hears it read: as on the other ſide, the hearing it read ſo immediately after will ſerve to confirm and rivet the ſenſe in his mind. The one is as the conning, the other as the repeating the Leſſon; which every School-boy can tell us is beſt done at the neareſt diſtance to each other. But I ſhall not contend for this, or any particular method: let the Scriptures be read in proportion to every mans leiſure and capacity, and read with attention; and we need not be ſcrupulous about circumſtances, when the main duty is ſecur'd.

Diſtinction is to be made between temporary precepts, and perpetual.

34. But as in the doctrinal, ſo in the preceptive part, there is a caution to be uſed in our attention. For we are to diſtinguiſh between thoſe temporary precepts that were adapted to particular times and occaſions, and ſuch as are of perpetual obligation. He that do's not this, may bring himſelf under the Jewiſh Law, or believe a neceſſity of ſelling all and giving it to the poor, becauſe 'twas Chriſts command to the rich man, *Matt.* 19. or incur other conſiderable miſchiefs.

And thoſe which are of univerſal and of particular concern.

35. Thus frequently commands are put in comprehenſive indefinite words, but concern only the Generality to whom the Law is written; and not thoſe who are entruſted with the vindication of their contempt. Accordingly 'tis ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not kill*, Mark 10. 19. which coucerns the private perſon; but extends not to the Magiſtrate in the execution of his office, who *is a revenger* appointed by God, *and bears not the ſword in vain*, Rom. 13. 4. So the injunction not *to ſwear at all*, Mat. 5. 34. refers to the common tranſactions of life; but not thoſe ſolemn occaſions where an oath is to give glory to God, *and is the end of all ſtrife*, Heb. 6. 16. Yet theſe

miſtakes at this day prevail with Anabaptiſts and Quakers, and bottom their denial of the Magiſtrates power to protect his Subjects by war, and to determine differences in Peace, by the oath of witneſſes in judicial proceedings.

Alſo between primary and ſecondary commands.

36. There is another diſtinction we are to attend to; and that is between abſolute and primary commands, and ſecondary ones: the former we are to ſet a ſpecial remark upon, as thoſe upon whoſe obſervance or violation our eternal life or death inſeparably depends. And therefore our firſt and moſt ſolicitous care muſt be concerning them. I mention this not to divert any from aſpiring to the higheſt degrees of perfection: but to reprove that prepoſterous courſe many take, who lay the greateſt weight upon thoſe things on which God lays the leaſt; and have more zeal for oblique intimations, than for expreſs downright commands; nay think by the one to commute for the contempt of the other. For example, faſting is recommended to us in Scripture, but in a far lower key than moral duties: rather as an expedient and help to vertue, than as properly a vertue it ſelf. And yet we may ſee men ſcrupulous in that, who ſtartle not at injuſtice and oppreſſion (that clamorous ſin that cries to heaven) who pretend to mortify their appetites by denying it its proper food or being luxurious in one ſort of it; and yet glut their avarice, eat up the poor, *and devour widows houſes*, Mat. 23.

Moral honeſty is to be firſt attended to and ſecur'd.

37. To ſuch as theſe 'twould be good advice to fix their attention on the abſolute commands, to ſtudy moral honeſty and the eſſentials of Chriſtianity; to make a good progreſs there, and do what God indiſpenſably requires: and then it may be ſeaſonable to think of voluntary oblations: but till then they are ſo far from homage, that they are the moſt reproachful flattery; an attempt to bribe God againſt himſelf; and a ſacrilege, like that of *Dionyſius*, who took *Apollo*'s golden robe, and gave him a ſtuff one.

A ſecond requiſite in reading is application of all things to our ſelves.

38. The ſecond thing requiſit in our reading is application: this is the proper end of our attention: and without this we may be very buſy to very little purpoſe. The moſt laborious attention without it, puts us but in the condition of thoſe poor ſlaves that labor in the mines: who with infinite toil dig that ore of which they ſhall never partake. If therefore we will appropriate that rich treaſure, we muſt apply, and ſo make it our own.

Whether it be in narrations of hiſtory and fact,

39. Let us then at every period of holy Writ, reflect and look on our ſelves as the perſons ſpoken to. When we find Philip giving baptiſm to the Eunuch upon this condition, that he *believes with all his heart*, Acts 8. let us conſider that unleſs we do ſo, our baptiſm (like a thing ſurreptitiouſly obtain'd) conveys no title to us, will avail us nothing,

Or in denunciations.

40. When we read our Saviours denunciation to the Jews, *except ye repent ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh*; Luke 13. 5. we are to look on it as if adreſt immediately to our ſelves; and conclude as great a neceſſity of our repentance. In thoſe black catalogues of crimes which the Apoſtle mentions, 1 *Cor.* 6. 10. and *Gal.* 5. 19, 20, 22. as excluding from the kingdom of heaven, we are to behold our own guilts arraign'd, and to reſolve that the ſame crimes will as certainly ſhut heavens gates againſt us, as thoſe to whom thoſe Epiſtles were immediately directed. In all the precepts of good life and Chriſtian vertue, we are to think our ſelves as nearly and particularly concern'd, as if we had bin Chriſt's Auditors on the Mount. So proportionably in all the threats and promiſes we are either to tremble or hope, according as we find our ſelves adhere to thoſe ſins or vertues to which they are affixt.

Which application can only render reading operative and effective.

41. This cloſe application would render what we read operative and effective, which without it will be uſeleſs and inſignificant. We may ſee an inſtance of it in *David*; who was not at all convinc'd of his own guilt by *Nathan*'s parable (tho the moſt oppoſite that was imaginable) till he roundly apply'd it, ſaying, *Thou art the man*: 2 Sam. 12. And unleſs we treat our ſelves at the ſame rate, the Scripture may fill our heads with high notions, nay with many ſpeculative truths, which yet amount to no more than the Devils theology, *James* 2. 19. and will as little advantage us.

Requiſites after reading; firſt recollection.

42. It now remains that we ſpeak of what we are to do after our reading, which may be ſumm'd up in two words: recollect and practiſe. Our memories are very frail as to things of this nature. And therefore we ought to impreſs them as deep as we can, by reflecting on what we have read. It is an obſervation out of the Levitical Law, that thoſe beaſts only were clean, and fit for ſacrifice, *that chew' the cud*, Lev. 11. 4. And tho the ceremony were Jewiſh, the moral is Chriſtian, and admoniſhes us how we ſhould reſolve and ruminate on ſpiritual inſtructions. Without this what we hear or read ſlips inſenſibly from us, and like letters writ in chalk, is wip'd out by the next ſucceeding thought: but recollection engraves and indents the characters in the mind. And he that would duly uſe it, would find other manner of impreſſions; more affective and more laſting than reading will leave.

Which we find neceſſary in the ſtudy of all ſciences,

43. We find it thus in all Sciences: he that only reads over the rules, and laies aſide the thoughts of them together with his Book, will make but a ſlow advance; whilſt he that plods, and ſtudies upon them, repeats and reinforces them upon his mind, ſoon arrives to an eminency. By this it was that *David* attain'd to that perfection in Gods Law as to ouſtrip his teachers, *and underſtand more than the Ancients*, Pſal. 119. 99, 100. becauſe it was his *meditation* as he himſelf tells us, *verſe* 97. 99.

And will have the ſame influence in divine

44. Let us therefore purſue the ſame method; and when we have read a portion of Scripture, let us recollect what obſervable things we have there met with: what exhortations to vertue, or determents from vice; what promiſes to obedience, or menaces to the contrary: what examples of Gods vengeance againſt ſuch or ſuch ſins, or what inſtances of his bleſſing upon duties. If we do this daily, we cannot but amaſs together a great ſtock of Scripture documents, which will be ready for us to produce upon every occaſion. Satan can aſſault us no where, but we ſhall be provided of a guard, a *Scriptum eſt*; which we ſee was the ſole armor the Captain of our ſalvation us'd in this encounter with him, *Mat.* 4. *ver.* 4. 7. and 10. and will be as ſucceſsful to us, if we will duly manage it.

Secondly practice is requir'd.

45. The laſt thing requir'd conſequent to our reading, is practice. This is the ultimate end, to which all the foregoing qualifications are directed. And if we fail here, the moſt aſſiduous diligence in all the former will be but loſt labour. Let us mean never ſo well, attend never ſo cloſe, recollect never ſo exactly; if after all we do not practice, all the reſt will ſerve but to inhance our guilt. Chriſtianity is an active Science, and the Bible was given us not merely for a theme of ſpeculation. but for a rule of life.

'Twill not avail us that our opinions are right, if our manners be crooked.

46. And alas, what will it avail us that our opinions are right, if our manners are crooked? When the Scripture has ſhew'd us What God requires of us, nay, has evinced to us the reaſonableneſs of the injunctions, the great agreeableneſs which they have to the excellency of our nature:

and has backt this with the aſſurance, that *in keeping of them there ſhall be a great reward*, Pſal. 19. 11. if in the midſt of ſuch importunate invitations to life we will chuſe death, we are indeed *worthy*, as the Wiſe-man ſpeaks, *to take part with it*, Wiſd. 1. 16. our crimes are hereby increas'd to a monſtrous bulk, and alſo depriv'd of that veil and ſhelter which darkneſs and ignorance would have give them. And a vicious Chriſtian may have cauſe as the laſt day to wiſh that he had ſtudied the Alcoran rather than the Bible. His ſenſualities might then have pleaded, that they were but the anticipating his Paradiſe, taking up that before hand, which his religion propos'd to him as his *Summum bonum*, his final and higheſt aim. But with what confuſion muſt a Chriſtian then appear, whoſe inſtitution obliges him to mortify the fleſh; and yet has made it the buſineſs of his life, not only to ſatisfy, but even to enrage and enflame its appetites? that has ſet up a counter-diſcipline to that of the Goſpel he profeſſes; and when that requires auſterities and ſelf-denials, to reduce corrupt nature to a tameneſs and ſubjection, has not only pull'd off the bridle, but us'd the ſpur; contriv'd Arts to debauch even corruption it ſelf; and has forc'd his reluctıng nature upon ſtudied and artificial lewdneſs? Such men may be thought to have read the Scripture with no other deſign than to be ſure to run counter to it; that by informing themſelves of Gods will, they may know the more exactly how to affront and contradict it.

'Tis monſtrous villany to read with malice and contempt.

47. Nay, ſo it is, too many unto malice add contempt; are not content only ſullenly to reſiſt its Precepts, but deſpiſe and revile them alſo, arraign the wiſdom of God, and pronounce the Divine Laws to be weak and impertinent; lay their Scenes of ridiculous mirth in the Bible, rally in the ſacred Dialect, and play the Buffoons with the moſt ſerious thing in the world. An impious licenciouſneſs which is now grown to that height, that it is one of the wonders of Gods long ſuffering that there are not as many eminent inſtances of the vengeance as there are of the guilt. I have formerly complain'd of it, and muſt ſtill crave leave to do ſo. It is indeed ſo ſpreading an infection, that we can never be ſufficiently arm'd againſt it. Some degrees of it have tainted many who have not utterly renounc'd their reverence for the Bible; there being thoſe who in their ſolemn moods own it as Gods word, and profeſs they muſt finally ſtand or fall by its verdict; who yet in their jocular humors make light and irreverent applications of its phraſes and ſentences, furniſh out their little jeſts in its attire, and uſe it as if they thought it good for nothing elſe.

Eſpecially in them who confeſs it ſacred.

48. And certainly this abuſe in men that own the Bible, is infinitely more monſtrous than in thoſe who defy it: the latter look on it as a common thing, and uſe it as ſuch: but for thoſe who confeſs it ſacred, thus to proſtitute it, is a flat contradiction as much againſt the rules of Diſcourſe as Religion: 'tis to offer the ſame abuſe to Chriſt in his Word, which the rude ſoldiers did to his Perſon; to bow the knee before it, and yet expoſe it as an object of ſcorn and laughter. But ſure there cannot be two things more inconſiſtent, than the avowing it to be dictated by God in order to the moſt important concern of man, and yet debaſe it to the vileſt purpoſes, make it the drudge and hackney to our ſportful humors, and bring it out as the Philiſtins did *Samſon*, only to make us merry, *Judg.* 16. 25.

The terrors of the Lord are very improper ſubjects to raiſe mirth.

49. Indeed one would wonder how that ſhould become a proper inſtrument for that purpoſe, that thoſe doctrines of righteouſneſs, tempe-

rance and judgment to come (every where ſcatter'd thro that Book) which ſet heathen *Felix* a trembling, ſhould ſet Chriſtians a laughing: and yet ſhould men cite the ſame things and phraſes out of another Author, there would be no jeſt in it. It ſeems therefore that the ſpirit and eſſence of this ſort of wit lies in the profaneneſs. How abſurd is it then for men that do not utterly abjure religion, to affect this impious ſort of raillery, which has nothing but daring wickedneſs to recommend it? For certainly, of all the ways of diſcourſe that ever pretended to wit, this has the leaſt claim to it.

'Tis the meaneſt attempt at wit to repeat and miſapply phraſes and fragments of books.

50. What ſtrength of reaſon, or height of fancy is there in repeating of phraſes and fragments of Books, when what they would ſay, they might much more properly expreſs in their words? In any other inſtances but this of the Bible, it would paſs rather for a defect than an exceſs of wit. But that which I ſuppoſe renders it ſo taking, is, that it is the cheapeſt expedient for men to arrive to that reputation. Men that cannot go to the coſt of any thing that is truly ingenious, can by this means immediately commence wits; if they can but charge their memories with half a dozen Texts, they need no other furniture for the trade: theſe mangled and tranſpoſed, will be ready at all turns, and render them applauded by thoſe who have no other meaſures of wit, but its oppoſition to Piety. But would God, men would look a little before them; and conſider what the final reckoning will be for ſuch advertiſements; and if the whole world be an unequal exchange for a ſoul, what a miſerable Merchant is he that barters his for a bald inſipid jeſt? ſuch as a ſober man would avoid were there no ſin in it.

'Tis a vain cuſe that at is done in ſport.

51. I know men are apt to flatter themſelves, that theſe lighter frolicks will paſs for nothing, ſo long as they do not ſeriouſly and maliciouſly oppoſe Gods word: but I fear they will find God in earneſt, tho they be in jeſt. He that has *magnified his word above all things*, Pſal. 138. 2. cannot brook that we ſhould make it vile and cheap, play and dally with it. And if it were a capital crime to convert any of the perfume of the Sanctuary to common uſe, *Exod.* 30. 32. can we think God can be pleaſed to ſee his more ſacred Word, the theme of our giddy mirth, and have his own words echoed to him in prophane drollery?

This wanton liberty leads to contempt.

52. But beſides 'tis to be conſider'd that this wanton liberty is a ſtep to the more ſolemn and deliberate contempt of Gods word: cuſtom do's ſtrangely preſcribe to us, and he that a while has us'd any thing irreverently, will at laſt bring his practice into argument, and conclude that there is no reverence due to it. God knows we are naturally too apt to ſlight and eaſy apprehenſions of ſacred things; and had need to uſe all Arts and inſtruments to impreſs an awe upon our minds.

'Tis wiſdom not to deſpiſe ſmall things, eſpecially vhere God d our ſouls re concern'd.

53. It will ſure then be very unſafe for us to trifle with them, and by ſo undue a familiarity draw on that contempt which we ſhould make it our care to avoid. The Wiſe-man ſays, *He that contemns ſmall things ſhall fall by little and little*, Eccl. 19. 1. And tho no degree of irreverence towards God or his Word, can be call'd a ſmall thing abſolutely conſider'd, yet comparatively with the more exorbitant degrees, it may; and yet that ſmaller is the ſeed and parent of the greateſt. It is ſo in all ſins, the kingdom of Satan like that of God, may be compar'd to a *grain of muſtard ſeed*, Mar. 13. 31. which tho little in it ſelf, is mighty in its increaſe.

No man is perfectly wicked at firſt.

54. No man ever yet began at the top of villany, but the advance is ſtill gradual from one degree to another; each commiſſion ſmoothing

and glibbing the way to the next. He that accuſtoms in ordinary diſcourſe, to uſe the ſacred name of God with as little ſentiment and reverence, as he do's that of his neighbor or ſervant; that makes it his common by-word, and cries Lord and God upon every the lighteſt occaſion of exclamation or wonder, this man has a very ſhort ſtep to the uſing it in oaths, and upon all frivilous occaſions, and he that ſwears vainly, is at no great diſtance from ſwearing falſely. It is the ſame in this inſtance of the Scriptures: He that indulges his wit to rally with them, will ſoon come to think them ſuch tame things that he may down-right ſcorn them: And when he is arriv'd to that, then he muſt pick quarrels to juſtify it, till at laſt he arrives even to the height of enmity.

The earliſt caution is the beſt.

55. Let every man therefore take heed of ſetting ſo much as one ſtep in this fatal circle; guard himſelf againſt the firſt inſinuation of this guilt; and when a jeſt offers it ſelf as a temptation, let him balance that with a ſober thought, and conſider whether the jeſt can quit the coſt of the profanation. Let him poſſeſs his mind with an habitual awe, take up the Bible with ſolemner thoughts, and other kind of apprehenſions than any human Author: and if he habituate himſelf to this reverence, every clauſe and phraſe of it that occurs to his mind, will be apter to excite him to devout ejaculations than vain laughter.

An inſtance of the Piety of K. Edward the ſixth.

56. It is reported of our excellent Prince King *Edward* the ſixth; that when in his Council Chamber, a Paper that was call'd for, happen'd to lie out of reach, and the Perſon concern'd to produce it, took a Bible that lay by, and ſtanding upon it reacht down the Paper: the King obſerving what was done, ran himſelf to the place, and taking the Bible in his hands, kiſſed it, and laid it up again. Of this it were a very deſirable moral, that Princes, and all perſons in authority, would take care not to permit any to raiſe themſelves by either a hypocritical or prophane trampling upon holy things. But beſides that, a more general application offers it ſelf; that all men of what condition ſoever, ſhould both themſelves abſtain from every action that has the appearance of a contempt of the holy Scripture; and alſo when they obſerve it in others, diſcountenance the inſolence: and by their words and actions, give teſtimony of the veneration which they have for that holy Book, they ſee others ſo wretchedly deſpiſe.

'Twill be of great importance to examine our progreſs.

57. But above all, let him who reads the Scriptnre, ſeriouſly ſet himſelf to the practice of it, and daily examine how he proceeds in it: he that diligently do's this, will not be much at leiſure to ſport with it: he will ſcarce meet with a text which will not give him cauſe of reflection, and provide him work within his own breaſt: every duty injoyn'd will prompt him to examine how he has perform'd; every ſin forbid, will call him to recollect how guilty he has bin; every pathetick ſtrain of Devotion will kindle his zeal, and at leaſt upbraid his coldneſs; every heroick example will excite his emulation. In a word, every part of Scripture will, if duly apply'd, contribute to ſome good and excellent end. And when a thing is proper for ſuch noble purpoſes, can it be the part of a wiſe man to apply it only to mean and trivial? Would any but an Idiot waſt that Sovereign Liquor in the waſhing of his feet, which was given him to expel poiſon from his heart? And are not we guilty of the like folly when we apply God's Word to ſerve only a ludicrous humor: and make our ſelves merry with that which was deſign'd for the moſt ſerious and moſt important purpoſe, the ſalvation of our ſouls. And indeed whoever takes any lower aim than that and the vertues preparatory to it in his ſtudy of Scripture, extremely debaſes it.

The promiſes of Scripture are not to be attain'd but by the obſervation of its precepts.

58. Let us therefore keep a ſteady eye upon that mark, and preſs towards it as the Apoſtle did; *Phil.* 3. 14. *walk by that rule* the holy Scripture propoſes; faithfully and diligently obſerve its precepts, that we may finally partake its promiſes. To this end continually pray we, in the words of our holy mother the Church, unto Almighty God, who has caus'd all holy Scripture to be written for our learning: that we may in ſuch wiſe hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt them, that by patience and comfort of his holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold faſt the bleſſed hope of everlaſting Life, which he has given us in our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

THE

G R III

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